

# The Chat

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# THE CHAT

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## General Field Notes

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# First Record of Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*) in South Carolina

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On the morning of 20 September 2021 we deployed several 2 m x 12 m x 30 mm mist nets as part of our general bird banding program at Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History (York, South Carolina). During the 9 a.m. check we noticed a hummingbird in a top net shelf near several sugar water feeders. When we extracted the hummingbird, we saw it was slightly larger than a typical female Ruby-throated Hummingbird (RTHU), the breeding species we typically band at the Center. We also immediately noticed the wing was rather long, and the #10 (outermost) primary feather was straight and with a thin vane on the leading edge. This was quite different from the configuration of a Ruby-throated female's wider, slightly curved #10.

Still thinking this was a female hummingbird of some sort, we looked at the gorget and were surprised to see three metallic feathers, one red, one green, and one red-and-green. In RTHU only males have iridescent red feathers, so our suspicion was growing.

Our attention then went to the bird's tail feathers (rectrices), which had rufous bases. This absolutely ruled out Ruby-throated Hummingbird and led us to suspect one of the western vagrant *Selasphorus* hummingbirds that, with increasing regularity over the past three decades or so, have been showing up during non-breeding season in the Eastern United States. These include Rufous Hummingbird (*S. rufus*, which now occurs every winter somewhere in the Carolinas); Allen's Hummingbird (*S. sasin*, which strongly resembles *S. rufus* but is much less common in the Carolinas); Calliope Hummingbird (*S. calliope*, a smaller species that appears rarely in the East); and Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*S. platycercus*). We banded two vagrant Rufous Hummingbirds at Hilton Pond Center in November 2001 and September 2002, but the new capture's long wings, narrow outer primary feathers, and fully rounded rectrices suggested a different *Selasphorus* species.

When encountering a *Selasphorus* hummingbird, one definitive way to determine species is through measurements. We took several, using criteria described in Pyle's *Identification Guide to North American Birds* (1997). The bird's weight was 3.50 grams, about the same as a typical female RTHU, so this measure was not diagnostic. However, compared to all four *Selasphorus* species, our hummingbird's measurements of a 51.1 mm wing chord, 31.0 mm tail length, and 20.1 mm culmen (top ridge of exposed bill length) each indicated the bird in hand must be a Broad-tailed Hummingbird (BTHU), a species that breeds in the Rocky Mountains and had never been reported from South Carolina.

To verify the bird's gender we needed to age it, using a hand lens to examine its upper mandible. In young hummingbirds, the bill shows many tiny corrugations or

etchings that fill in and smooth out as the bird ages. Our bird had a smooth bill with very few corrugations near the base, indicating it was an adult that had to have hatched out before the 2021 calendar year. Thus, as an adult bird, it had to be female, despite its three metallic gorget feathers; adult male Broad-tailed Hummingbirds resemble adult male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, complete with full red gorgets (Immature male RTHU may have one or more metallic red throat feathers).

Despite its superficial similarity to an adult male RTHU, an adult male Broad-tailed Hummingbird has a gorget that's a bit rosier than ruby, has long wings, is somewhat larger, and has rufous in the rectrices. In addition, an adult male Ruby-throat has a forked tail, while the Broad-tailed's name is derived from a tail configuration that is rounded in all age and sex classes. (Female and immature male RTHU have rounded tails.) The #10 primary in an adult male BTHU has a flipped-up tip, an in-hand characteristic that also differentiates it from an adult male RTHU.

In dorsal view our adult female Broad-tailed Hummingbird looked very much like an adult female Ruby-throat, except the long wings again stood out. There was no brown edging to the bird's back feathers, another sign that would have indicated an immature hatch-year individual.

Ventrally the BTHU looked even less RTHU-like, with rusty flanks, rufous in the tail, and those metallic gorget feathers. As in female and immature Ruby-throats, female and immature male Broad-tailed Hummingbirds have white tips on the outer three rectrices.

After banding the new capture and taking photos needed to document a new state species, we inserted the bird's bill into one of our sugar water feeders and watched as she drank her fill. We have not observed her since banding and release.

There is one photographic account for Broad-tailed Hummingbird in December 2001 from North Carolina (Campbell 2003) and several records from Georgia. eBird shows the species has been encountered numerous times along the central Gulf Coast outside of breeding season.

## References

- Campbell, Susan. 2003. First Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*) Record for North Carolina.
- Pyle, Peter. 1997. Identification Guide to North American Birds. Part I. Bolinas, CA. Slate Creek Press.





Gorget of adult female Broad-tailed Hummingbird, showing three metallic feathers.



Right wing of adult female Broad-tailed Hummingbird, showing long, straight outermost primary feather (#10) with narrow leading vane.



Lateral view of adult female Broad-tailed hummingbird showing wings extending nearly to tip of the tail.



Dorsal view of adult female Broad-tailed Hummingbird, showing no buffy feather edges that (in September) would suggest an immature individual.





Ventral view of adult female Broad-tailed Hummingbird.



Bill of adult female Broad-tailed Hummingbird, showing smoothness along its length. Immature birds have some degree of etchings or corrugations that smooth out over several months.

All photos by Bill Hilton, Jr.



# Vegetative Nest Sites, Nest Survival, and Nest Fate of Birds within the Central Business District of Rockingham, North Carolina

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## Abstract

I assessed vegetative nest sites, nest survival, and nest fate of birds within the central business district (25-block plot: 42.4 ha) of Rockingham (~9000 population) in south-central North Carolina. I documented 324 nests of 16 avian species in 1994. Most nests were built in native trees and exotic shrubs. Nest survival in platform or open-cup nests for the eight most numerous species (seven native, one exotic) was low, regardless of whether nests were clustered at low heights (Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, House Finch, Northern Cardinal) or built at greater heights (Mourning Dove, Gray Catbird, American Robin, Common Grackle). Nest fate throughout the breeding season did not vary, regardless of nest height, landscape element, origin, substrate type, or foliage type. This study demonstrates that nest records amplify relationships with vegetative habitat and elements of the landscape matrix in urban environments.

## Introduction

In southeastern North America, no breeding bird censuses other than in large urban areas had been conducted in a town, and none from a central business district until McNair (2021) conducted such a census in downtown Rockingham, North Carolina in 1994. The focus was on biotic homogenization of two functional guilds - suburban adapters and urban invaders (Marzluff and Rodewald 2008) - within this urban landscape. Suburban adapters (e.g., American Robin [*Turdus migratorius*]) are typically adapted to diverse, young, edge, and disturbed habitats (Marzluff and Rodewald 2008). Urban invaders include House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) populations in eastern North America (Badyaev et al. 2012). The investigation included the relationship of species richness and the number of nest records to an estimate of the amount of vegetation within city blocks of a 25-block study plot. However, McNair (2021) did not document other breeding parameters centered around nest records within the context of vegetative habitat and elements of the landscape matrix.

Consequently, I asked the following three questions: 1) How has avian species use of nest sites depended on native or exotic vegetation; I expected most nest sites in trees to be of native species and most nest sites in shrubs to be of exotic species, following the conventional pattern of many urban landscapes where the majority of trees are native and the majority of shrubs are exotic (Burghardt et al. 2008), 2) How have different elements (e.g., solitary trees and shrubs, hedgerows) of the landscape matrix accounted for

variation in avian species use of vegetative nest sites; I expected avian species to follow the general pattern of nest site use in different elements of urban environments as documented in southeastern North America by the Birds of North America species accounts, and 3) What are the patterns of nest survival and nest fate for avian species breeding in vegetation; I had a neutral expectation for both in downtown Rockingham because of mixed results from studies conducted in urban environments (Borgmann and Rodewald 2004, Chamberlain et al. 2009, Stinson and Pejchar 2018).

## Methods

### Field Site Description

Rockingham, North Carolina, the county seat of Richmond County, was founded in 1774 at Cole's Hill (Hutchinson 1998), a bluff rising between Hitchcock and Falling Creeks, along the contact zone (Fall Line) where the Piedmont meets the Sandhills, a subregion of the Coastal Plain. The 25-block study plot (42.4 ha) is centered on the ancient location of Cole's Hill, which comprises the central business district of Rockingham. The plot is largely comprised of buildings and other sealed surfaces, with smaller areas of a mixture of remnant native and planted exotic vegetation including lawns, and excludes town blocks of adjacent residential areas. The plot does not contain riparian or other aquatic habitats, forests, woodlands, farmland, parks, cemeteries, allotment gardens, or industrial areas. The plot contained one nest box in one block and isolated snags were present in about five blocks. A full description and map of the study plot is provided in McNair (2021).

### Vegetation

Species nomenclature for scientific names, authorities, and common names follows Weakley (2015). Several other sources were consulted for nomenclature of some non-naturalized exotic species (Lance 2004, ITIS 2020, USDA-NRCS 2020). Definitions of trees, shrubs, and vines follow Radford, Ahles, and Bell (1968), Lance (2004), and Weakley (2015). A tree was defined as a woody perennial, usually with a solitary trunk or main stem, growing at maturity to over a height of 4.6-6.1 m; a shrub as a woody perennial lacking a central trunk and usually branching from the base with several main stems, growing at maturity to heights reaching 7.6-9.1 m although usually much lower; and a vine as a plant which climbs by tendrils or other means, or which trails or creeps along the ground.

Downtown Rockingham contains a mixture of cropped (maintained) remnant native vegetation and exotic vascular plants. Plants herein even if curbside plantings or cultivars are considered native species if their original range includes Rockingham; this definition excludes species naturalized beyond their original ranges by aid of cultivation such as Pecan (*Carya illinoensis*). I consulted Weakley (2015), supplemented by several other sources (e.g., Sorrie 2011) to determine the original range of native species that occurred naturally without cultivation in North Carolina. Most exotic plants in Rockingham are of species originally from eastern Asia, although some are from other regions or continents.

Plantings on properties in the central business district usually adhered to recommendations of regulations by the City of Rockingham (2020). The landscape matrix of all vascular plant species within the study area was categorized into five



elements: espaliers and trellises, solitary trees or shrubs (usually spaced at least 1.3-1.5 m apart), hedgerows (a row of closely spaced shrubs and/or low-growing trees with an occasional tall tree, which may include exotic species and remnant native vegetation), tree rows, and woodlots (as distinct from larger woodlands) which is the most complex element. The tallest tree within the study plot was a 30-m Willow Oak (*Quercus phellos*).

### Vegetation Index

I developed a vegetation index for the diverse mixture of remnant native vegetation and landscaped plantings by overlaying an acetate grid of mylar squares on magnified aerial photographs from 1993 of each of the 25 blocks at a scale of 1:840 (2.54 cm:21.336 m; original measurements: 1 in:70 ft). This vegetation index relied upon estimation of the spatial coverage of vascular plants from each of the five landscape elements within each block. I verified this effort for one of these elements (espaliers and trellises) by an estimation of its spatial coverage based on field measurements. I excluded measurements of any exaggerated images of vascular plants. If vegetation filled at least 50% of a mylar square, I scored it as one square. This index excluded plants less than 1 m tall and ground vegetation, including lawns, where birds did not nest. For all blocks combined, the proportion and presence of vegetation represented from each of the five landscape elements was as follows: espaliers and trellises, 0.02 (six blocks); solitary trees and shrubs, 0.484 (25 blocks); hedgerows, 0.123 (17 blocks); tree rows, 0.078 (six blocks); and woodlots, 0.313 (six blocks).

### Avian Surveys

Species nomenclature for scientific names, authorities, and common names follows Chesser et al. (2019). I conducted intensive nest searches on 94 days from 27 March to 18 September 1994; field effort was concentrated from April through July (236.75 of 252.25 hr; 94%). I recorded the plant species that contained the nest, nest substrate (tree, shrub, and/or vine), nest height, and substrate height. Most effort was devoted to obtaining information from platform or open-cup breeding species rather than cavity-nesting species. The latter's nests were generally inaccessible. Eight (seven residents, one migrant) of the 16 avian species accounted for 294 of the 307 observations (95.8%). The eight most numerous species (see Results) nesting in vegetation were multiple-brooded, except for Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*), which is usually single-brooded (Peer and Bollinger 1997).

### Data Analysis

Vegetative nest sites: I compared the number of observed nests to calculation of the number of expected nests (Pearson's chi-square test of independence) for the eight most numerous species that used platform (Mourning Dove [*Zenaida macroura*]) or open-cup nests, after adjustment for their different proportions of nests in two landscape elements (solitary trees and shrubs: 0.637; hedgerows: 0.363). Eight more avian species that used vegetative nest sites were excluded because they accounted for only 13 observations. The other three landscape elements were also excluded because even when combined more than 20% of expected values <5. I then performed post-hoc Pearson's chi-square tests with Yates' correction (all expected values >5), testing pairwise comparisons of values of one species against the sum of values of the other seven; I reduced experiment-wide Type

1 error with the Bonferroni correction ( $P = 0.05/8$ , so  $\alpha = 0.0062$ ). I used Kruskal-Wallis test with the same Bonferroni correction to examine for any differences in nest height and substrate height among the eight species. I then used post-hoc non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-tests to examine differences among nest height and substrate height for all species pairwise-comparisons of these eight species with the Bonferroni correction ( $P = 0.05/28$ , so  $\alpha = 0.0018$ ).

Nest survival: Nest survival is the probability that a nest fledges at least one young. I usually recorded nest contents at least twice per week, but when possible, checked nests from a distance using binoculars. I considered nests to have been depredated if found empty and it was impossible that the young could have fledged, based on the stage of their development on the previous visit. Nest survival was verified in some cases by searching the surrounding area for fledglings or adult birds carrying food. I used 218 of 324 open-cup nests (67.3%) for nest survival analysis.

I used the exposure-days method of Mayfield (1961, 1975) to measure mean nest survival for Mourning Dove and seven species of passerines that built open cup nests in vegetation. I terminated the exposure period for nests with uncertain fate with the last observed active date, and for nests with known fate with the midpoint between last observed active date and first observed inactive date (Manolis et al. 2000). After periodically monitoring active nests and recording the stage and fate of eggs and nestlings, I calculated mean nest survival using the combined length of the incubation and nestling periods taken from the Birds of North America species accounts (Mourning Dove: 28 days, Otis et al. 2008; American Robin: 26 days, Vanderhoff et al. 2016; Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*): 23.5 days, Smith et al. 2011; Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*): 24 days, Cavitt and Haas 2014; Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*): 24.5 days, Farnsworth et al. 2011; House Finch: 29.5 days, Badyaev et al. 2012; Common Grackle: 27 days, Peer and Bollinger 1997; Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*): 22 days, Halkin and Linville 1999). Following Mayfield (1975), I did not document any significant differences in mean nest survival between the incubation and nestling periods for each species ( $P$  for all Pearson's chi-square tests  $\geq 0.25$ ), except American Robin ( $P = 0.047$ ). I still combined the two periods for American Robin since the difference in mean nest survival between separate and combined calculations was only 0.02. Thereafter, I used the method of Johnson (1979) to calculate the standard error and 95% confidence intervals of mean nest survival for all eight species.

Nest fate: I used non-parametric tests to assess any differences in nest fate (failure, success, uncertain); removal of uncertain fates produced similar results, so I used the full data set ( $n = 214$ ) for the above eight species (Manolis et al. 2000). First, I used Kruskal-Wallis test with the Bonferroni correction ( $0.05/3$ , so  $\alpha = 0.017$ ) to examine for any differences in nest fate by nest height; all three fate groups had a distribution with the same shape. Second, I used the chi-square test to examine for any differences in nest fate by date of initiation of incubation. I compressed the date of initiation of incubation to six time periods (late March-early April, late April, early May, late May, June, July-September) to meet sample size requirements (every expected cell  $\geq 5$ ). Third, I used separate chi-square tests to examine for any differences in nest fate across all open-cup nesting species by four vegetative characteristics at nest sites (landscape element, origin

[native or exotic], substrate type, foliage type). For nest-site landscape element, I compressed three of the five categories (espaliers and trellises, tree rows, woodlots) into one category to meet sample size requirements; I also used a separate chi-square test on just the two main categories (solitary trees and shrubs, hedgerows) because of the disparate nature of the compressed category. For nest site origin, I removed two unknown cases. For nest site substrate type, I merged the two hybrid categories containing vines (tree-vine, shrub-vine) with vines to form one category. For nest site foliage, I used four types (deciduous, tardily deciduous-subevergreen, evergreen, mixed deciduous-evergreen) and removed one unrecorded case. Finally, I performed a chi-square test to examine for any differences in nest fate for the comparison of the two most numerous landscape elements (solitary trees and shrubs, hedgerows) and substrate types (trees, shrubs). All analyses were performed with statistical software available in McDonald (2014) and Real Statistics Using Excel (2019).

## Results

### Vegetative Nest Sites

Species composition: Sixteen avian species nested in native and exotic trees, shrubs, vines, or a combination of these three nest site substrates, representing 30 native and 35 exotic plant species (Appendix 1). The number of native plants (180; 50.7%) and of nests built in native plants slightly exceeded the number of exotic plants (175; 49.3%) and of nests built in exotic plants that were used to support 303 nests (Table 1). One hundred ninety-seven nests were built in trees (65%) and 59 in shrubs (19.5%). Over twice the number of nests in trees were built in native plants (especially Water [*Quercus nigra*] and Willow oaks) compared to exotic plants, even though the number of native species used (25; 58%) was not much greater than exotic tree species (18). In contrast, all nests in shrubs were built in 12 exotic species (especially Chinese Holly [*Ilex cornuta*] and Japanese Rose [*Rosa multiflora*]). The remaining number of nests (47; 15.5%) were built in vines or a combination of the three nest site substrates (Table 1). Vines, alone or tangled among trees and shrubs (especially the native Common Greenbrier [*Smilax rotundifolia*] and exotic Japanese Honeysuckle [*Lonicera japonica*]), were incorporated as support for 39 of the 303 nests (12.9%). I identified an additional 14 native (10 trees and shrubs, four vines) and 44 exotic species (41 trees and shrubs, three vines) in which I did not detect an avian nest on the study plot.

Landscape elements: Solitary trees and shrubs (55%) and hedgerows (30%) were the two major elements of the landscape matrix that contained nests by 16 breeding species on the study plot in 1994. Two of the eight most numerous species had strong associations for landscape elements ( $\chi^2_7 = 46.6$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ; Figure 1), American Robin for solitary trees (and shrubs) ( $\chi^2 = 13.2$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) and Gray Catbird for hedgerows ( $\chi^2 = 16.9$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). House Finch only built nests in two landscape elements (solitary trees and shrubs, espaliers and trellises), the most restricted use by any of the eight species.

Nest and substrate heights: Differences in median nest height ( $n = 295$ ) and substrate height ( $n = 290$ ) among eight avian species were highly significant ( $H = 123.62$  and  $123.54$ , respectively,  $df = 7$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Four species (Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, House Finch, Northern Cardinal) were clustered at low heights, whereas the other four (Mourning Dove, Gray Catbird, American Robin, Common Grackle) were

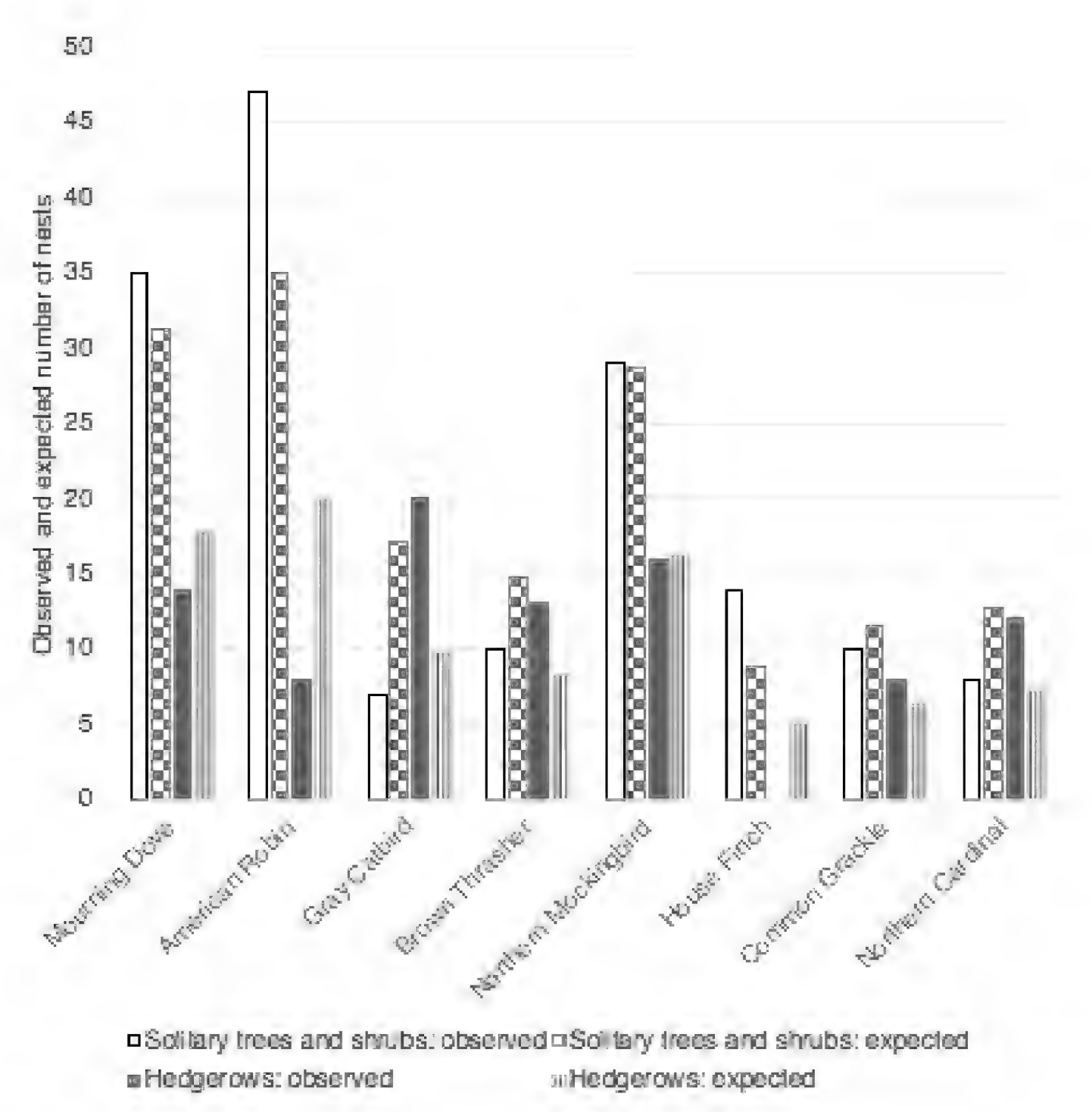


Figure 1. The number of observed and expected nests at two elements (solitary trees and shrubs, hedgerows) of the landscape matrix for eight avian species on the study plot in downtown Rockingham, NC, in 1994.

at greater heights (Figure 2a, b). American Robin nested at the greatest height and in the tallest vegetation, Brown Thrasher at the lowest height and in the shortest vegetation.

Median nest heights of the four species clustered at low heights were not significantly different from each other or from Gray Catbird but were significantly lower than the other three species (post-hoc Mann-Whitney U tests, all  $P < 0.001$ ; Figure 2a). The median nest height of American Robin was significantly greater than Mourning Dove and Gray Catbird (all  $P < 0.001$ ), but all other pairwise comparisons among the four species with greater median nest heights were not significant.

Differences in median substrate heights paralleled results on nest heights, with the following exceptions (Figure 2b). The median substrate height of Gray Catbird was significantly greater than Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, and Northern Cardinal (all  $P < 0.001$ ), but not House Finch; likewise, the median substrate height of Common Grackle was not significantly greater compared to House Finch. Finally, the median substrate height of American Robin was significantly greater than Gray Catbird and Common Grackle (all  $P < 0.001$ ), but not Mourning Dove.

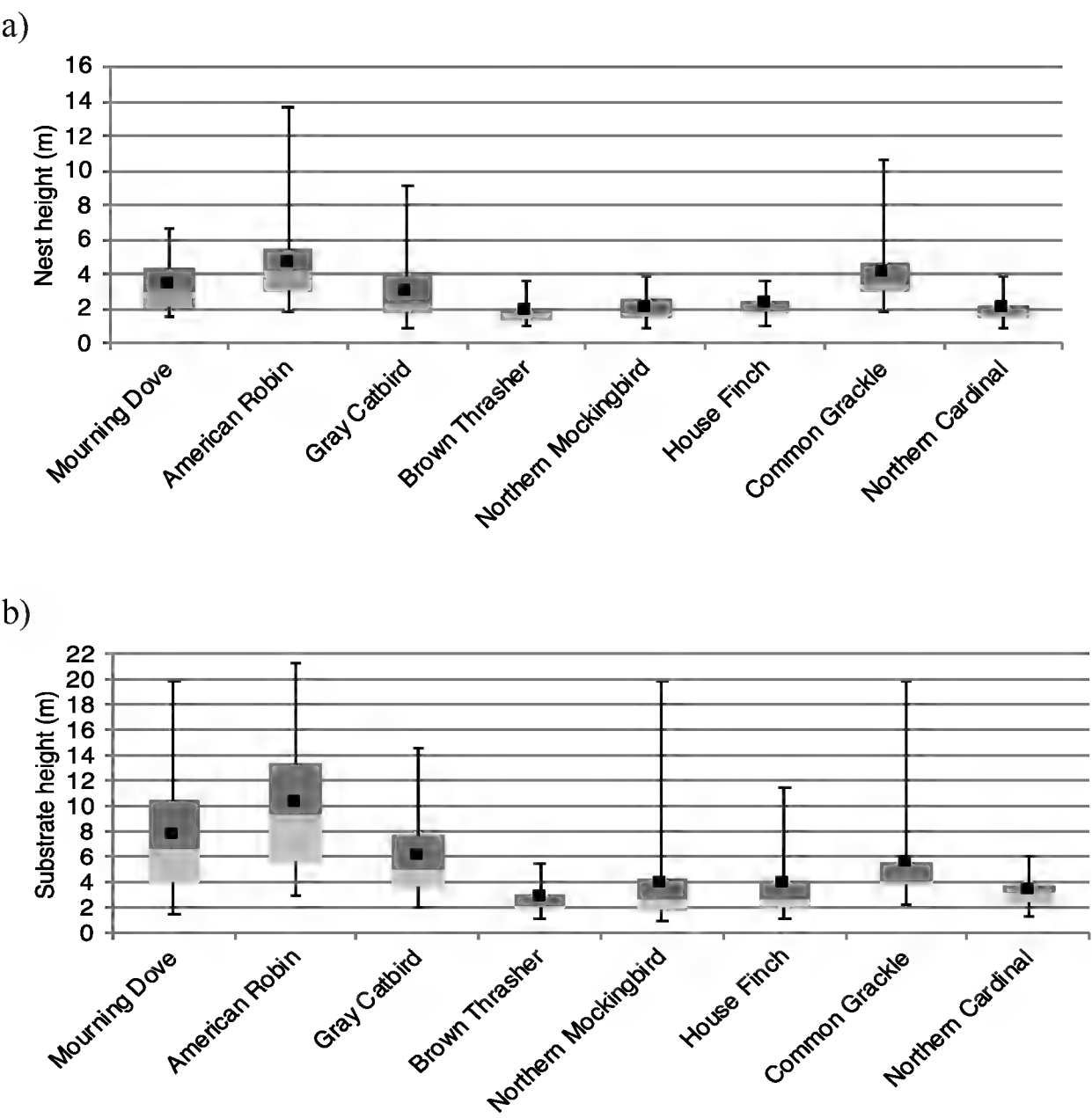


Figure 2. Box-and-whisker plots that display the median, Q1-Q3, and min-max values of nest heights (m) (Figure 2a) and substrate heights (m) (Figure 2b), respectively, at vegetative nest sites for eight avian species on the study plot in downtown Rockingham, NC, in 1994. Small solid black squares represent the mean value for each species.

with values of the four species nesting at low heights. Common Grackles usually nested close to the top of vegetation, which was particularly pronounced in an American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) tree row which contained the only semi-colony within the study plot.

Table 1. Number of nests in native, exotic, and mixed vegetation by nest site substrate.

Nest Site Substrate	Native	Exotic	Mixed <sup>a</sup>	Unknown	Total
Tree	137	59	0	1	197
Tree/shrub	0	2	6	0	8
Tree/shrub/vine	0	0	1	0	1
Tree/vine	8	7	8	0	23
Shrub	0	57	0	2	59
Shrub/vine	0	2	3	0	5
Vine	2	6	2	0	10
TOTAL	147	133	20	3	303

<sup>a</sup> Mixture of native and exotic vegetation.

Nest Survival

Mean nest survival for Mourning Dove and seven species of passerines that used open-cup nests in vegetation was low, ranging from 0.24 (American Robin) to 0.39 (Gray Catbird, House Finch; Table 2). No significant differences in nest survival were documented between any of the eight species; 95% confidence intervals were wide, especially at the upper end which were over 0.50 except for Mourning Dove and American Robin (Table 2). Infrequent visits to some nests contributed to a high proportion of uncertain fates for all eight species, ranging from 19.5% (American Robin) to 37.5% (Northern Cardinal).

Nest Fate

Median nest heights across all eight species between nests that failed, were successful, or whose fate was uncertain (n = 111, 48, and 55, respectively) were significantly different (Kruskal-Wallis H = 6.53, df = 2, P = 0.04); nests of uncertain fate were located higher in vegetation than successful nests (3.05 m vs 1.98 m; Mann-Whitney U = 928, P = 0.01). The fate of nests by date of initiation of incubation across all eight species from late March to early September was not significantly different ( $\chi^2$  = 7.64, df = 10, P = 0.66). Among vegetative characteristics at nest sites, nest fate by origin, substrate type, and foliage type was not significant ( $\chi^2$  = 1.74, df = 4, P = 0.78;  $\chi^2$  = 7.75, df = 6, P = 0.26;  $\chi^2$  = 8.85, df = 4, P = 0.06), respectively. Nest fate by landscape element was significant ( $\chi^2$  = 14.52, df = 4, P = 0.006), but when the disparate compressed category was removed, nest fate between solitary trees and shrubs compared to hedgerows was not significant ( $\chi^2$  = 3.60, n = 183, df = 2, P = 0.17); examination of individual cells in the former analysis revealed that the difference could primarily be attributed to House Finches nesting in espaliers and trellises and higher success than expected for Common Grackles nesting at their semi-colony in a tree row. Finally, nest fate for the comparison of the two most numerous landscape elements (solitary trees and



shrubs, hedgerows) and substrate types (trees, shrubs) was not significant ( $\chi^2 = 3.10$ ,  $n = 161$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $P = 0.80$ ).

Table 2. Nest survival of Mourning Dove and seven species of passerines that used open-cup nests in vegetation on the Rockingham study plot in 1994.					
Common Name ( <i>Scientific Name</i> )	Sample Size	Fate		Total Exposure- Days	Mayfield Nest Survival: Mean ( $\pm$ 95% CI)
		Uncertain	Known		
Mourning Dove ( <i>Zenaida macroura</i> )	48	12	36	603	0.25 (0.15, 0.42)
American Robin ( <i>Turdus migratorius</i> )	41	8	33	448	0.24 (0.13, 0.43)
Gray Catbird ( <i>Dumetella carolinensis</i> )	18	4	14	181	0.39 (0.19, 0.79)
Northern Mockingbird ( <i>Mimus polyglottos</i> )	38	10	28	429	0.35 (0.21, 0.57)
Brown Thrasher ( <i>Toxostoma rufum</i> )	22	7	15	248	0.37 (0.20, 0.69)
House Finch ( <i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i> )	19	4	15	285	0.39 (0.20, 0.72)
Common Grackle ( <i>Quiscalus quiscula</i> )	16	5	11	156	0.29 (0.11, 0.73)
Northern Cardinal ( <i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i> )	16	6	10	156	0.27 (0.11, 0.64)

Discussion

The diverse mixture of landscaped plantings and remnant native vegetation in downtown Rockingham in 1994 supported a breeding avifauna dominated by seven native and one exotic species. As expected (Burghardt 2008), these species nested in native trees and exotic shrubs distributed among five elements of the landscape matrix. The NC Forest Service (2020) publishes a recommended list of street trees for North Carolina (five species each of native and exotic plants accounted for 33% and 37%, respectively, of individual trees used as nest sites in this study). The list of suitable trees documented in this study is generally more useful as a guide for plantings in south-central NC, but full information is now available in the North Carolina Gardener Toolbox (North Carolina State Extension 2021). Although only ~21% of shrubs compared to trees were used as nest-sites in downtown Rockingham, planting of shrubs is encouraged by the City of Rockingham (2020) which has regulations that specify the proportion of land to be landscaped. The breeding bird avifauna dependent on vegetation in downtown Rockingham could be improved by additional plantings of landscaped trees and shrubs and less cropping of remnant native vegetation, although increasing tree cover (Ibáñez-Álamo et al. 2019; cf., Morelli et al. 2018) is less important now because of the collapse of the local American Robin and Common Grackle breeding populations (McNair 2021). Enhancement of or creation of hedgerows for Gray Catbirds, especially in blocks with a

low amount and proportion of vegetation, is one way the urban landscape of downtown Rockingham could be improved.

Plantings of more native shrubs with replacement of some lawns and reduction of impervious surfaces has been identified as one of the most important challenges for small-scale bird conservation on commercial and non-commercial properties in central business districts (Snep et al. 2016, Ibáñez-Álamo et al. 2019; cf., Borgmann and Rodewald 2004). Nelson et al. (2017) found that nest survival was typically neutral even for birds that preferred nesting in exotic vegetation, but Stinson and Pejchar (2018) stated the probability of a significant decrease in nest survival (and productivity) was higher for birds using exotic shrubs. Certain exotic shrubs such as Japanese Rose, which was frequently used in Rockingham, increased the risk of nest predation for Northern Cardinals in Illinois (Rodewald et al. 2009). However, Northern Cardinals and Gray Catbirds have nested in other shrubs in Illinois and have shown positive responses to exotic vegetation (Schneider and Miller 2014). Favored exotic shrubs for nest sites at Rockingham, such as solitary Chinese Holly, in clumps (cf., Rousseau et al. 2015, Rega-Brodsky and Nilon 2016), or as a hedge (Filliater et al. 1994, Burghardt et al. 2008, McCuster et al. 2010, Schlossberg and King 2010, Meyer et al. 2015, Nelson et al. 2017) should not be discouraged until plantings of favorable native shrubs are established.

This study demonstrated that two native open-cup nesting species (American Robin, Gray Catbird) used particular elements of the landscape matrix in which to build nests, which conforms with documented habitat and nest-site preferences of these two species (Pitts 1984, Smith et al. 2011, Vanderhoff et al. 2016). These two species, plus the other six most numerous species, regardless of differences in their abundance and distribution within the study plot (McNair 2021), used appropriate nest-site types (e.g., shrubs and short trees for Northern Mockingbird, Farnsworth et al. 2011). The eight species also generally built nests at expected heights in suitable substrates (op. cit.), including higher nest heights of American Robin and Common Grackle that are usually found in urbanized environments as opposed to natural habitats (Savard and Falls 1981).

Nonetheless, vegetative characteristics for elements of the landscape matrix, origin, substrate type, and foliage appeared to have little influence on nest outcomes for open-cup nesting species whose nest survival was apparently low across the breeding season in 1994. Improving the frequency of examination of nest contents, especially of nests located at greater heights will increase sample sizes, reduce the proportion of uncertain fates, and increase precision (reduce wide confidence intervals) for estimates of nest survival. Nest survival of 41% for three species (American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Cardinal) at vacant lots in Baltimore, Maryland (Rega-Brodsky and Nilon 2016) was higher compared to Rockingham; nest survival was also higher for Northern Mockingbirds in urbanized environments of Gainesville, Florida (Stracey and Robinson 2012). In contrast, nest survival of Gray Catbirds at two of three suburban sites in Maryland (metropolitan areas of Washington, DC) was low (Balogh et al. 2011). Balogh et al. (2011) concluded that predation pressure was the ecological driver for these two population sinks. A large suite of predators (native and exotic terrestrial mammals, native avian predators, native snakes) plus cropping of vegetation during the breeding season was likely responsible for apparent low nest survival in downtown Rockingham.

However, additional data beyond one year are required to determine whether downtown Rockingham is a population sink for nesting birds.

Badyaev et al. (2012) stated the exotic House Finch does not seem to compete with any native species for nest-sites. Over half of House Finch nests in vegetation in downtown Rockingham were built in espaliers and trellises, even though this landscape element comprised only a very small proportion of the vegetation. The only other species to use this landscape element for their nests was Northern Mockingbird. House Finches also nested along streets in solitary Crape-myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*), which mockingbirds occasionally used. Potential competitive effects between House Finches and Northern Mockingbirds among nest sites and elements of the landscape matrix in urban areas of southeastern North America, where mockingbirds are increasing (Hanauer et al. 2010, Stracey and Robinson 2012), need to be more fully investigated.

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Appendix 1. List of native and exotic plants (trees, shrubs, vines) used as nest sites by 16 avian species in downtown Rockingham in 1994.		
Scientific Name (Common Name)	Nest Site Substrate <sup>a</sup>	Number
Native Species (n = 30) <sup>b</sup>		
<i>Acer rubrum</i> L. (Red Maple)	T	2
<i>Betula nigra</i> L. (River Birch)	T	2
<i>Campsis radicans</i> (L.) Seemann ex Bureau (Trumpet-creeper)	V	2
<i>Celtis laevigata</i> Willdenow (Sugarberry)	T	14
<i>Cercis canadensis</i> L. (Eastern Redbud)	T	6
<i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i> (L.) Britton, Sterns, & Poggenburg (Atlantic White Cedar)	T	3
<i>Cornus florida</i> L. (Flowering Dogwood)	T	10
<i>Crataegus</i> L. 1753 (Hawthorn)	T	1
<i>Ilex opaca</i> Aiton (American Holly)	T	18
<i>Juglans nigra</i> L. (Black Walnut)	T	1
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i> L. (Eastern Red Cedar)	T	9
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> L. (Tulip-tree)	T	2
<i>Malus coronaria</i> (L.) P. Miller (Wild Crabapple)	T	2
<i>Morella cerifera</i> L. (Common Wax-myrtle)	T	1
<i>Morus rubra</i> L. (Red Mulberry)	T	4
<i>Muscadinia rotundifolia</i> Michaux (Muscadine)	V	6
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> (L.) Planchon (Virginia-creeper)	V	1
<i>Pinus taeda</i> L. (Loblolly Pine)	T	13
<i>Pinus virginiana</i> P. Miller (Virginia Pine)	T	1
<i>Platanus occidentalis</i> L. (American Sycamore)	T	1
<i>Populus deltoides</i> Bartram ex Marshall (Eastern Cottonwood)	T	2
<i>Prunus serotina</i> Ehrhart (Wild Black Cherry)	T	2
<i>Quercus nigra</i> L. (Water Oak)	T	27
<i>Quercus phellos</i> L. (Willow Oak)	T	28
<i>Salix nigra</i> Marshall (Black Willow)	T	1
<i>Sassafras albidum</i> (Nuttall) Nees (Sassafras)	T	2
<i>Smilax bona-nox</i> L. (Catbrier)	V	1
<i>Smilax rotundifolia</i> L. (Common Greenbrier)	V	12
<i>Ulmus alata</i> Michaux (Winged Elm)	T	1
<i>Ulmus americana</i> L. (American Elm)	T	5
Subtotal	T=25; V=5	180
Exotic Species (n = 35) <sup>c</sup>		
<i>Acer saccharum</i> Marshall (Sugar Maple)	T	3
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i> (P. Miller) Swingle (Tree-of-Heaven)	T	9
<i>Albizia julibrissin</i> Durazzini (Mimosa)	T	3
<i>Araucaria araucana</i> (Molina) K. Koch (Monkeypuzzle Tree)	T	2
<i>Carya illininoensis</i> (Wangenheim) K. Koch (Pecan)	T	8
<i>Cedrus deodara</i> (Roxburgh ex D. Don) G. Don (Deodar Cedar)	T	3
<i>Clematis terniflora</i> A.P. de Candolle (Yam-leaved Clematis)	V	4
<i>Deutzia scabra</i> Thunberg (Roughleaf Deutzia)	S	1
<i>Elaeagnus pungens</i> Thunberg (Thorny-olive)	S	2
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i> L. (Ginkgo)	T	2
<i>Hedera helix</i> L. (English Ivy)	V	4

<i>Ilex cornuta</i> Lindley (Chinese Holly)	S	25
<i>Ilex crenata</i> Thunberg (Japanese Holly)	S	4
<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i> L. (Crape-myrtle)	T	12
<i>Ligustrum japonicum</i> Thunberg (Japanese Privet)	S	4
<i>Ligustrum sinense</i> Loureiro (Chinese Privet)	S	7
<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i> Lindley & Paxton (Sweet-breath-of-spring)	S	3
<i>Lonicera japonica</i> Thunberg (Japanese Honeysuckle)	V	16
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> L. (Southern Magnolia)	T	6
<i>Magnolia × soulangeana</i> Soulange-Bodin (Saucer Magnolia)	T	4
<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i> (Thunb.) Siebold & Zucc. ex Steud. (Princesstree)	T	2
<i>Photinia</i> Lindley 1821 (Photinia)	S	1
<i>Photinia glabra</i> (Thunberg) Maxim. (Japanese Photinia)	S	3
<i>Populus</i> L. 1753 (Poplar)	T	2
<i>Prunus caroliniana</i> (P. Miller) Aiton (Carolina Laurel Cherry)	T	1
<i>Pueraria montana</i> (Loureiro) Merrill (Kudzu)	V	2
<i>Pyracantha</i> M.J. Roemer 1847 (Firethorn)	S	5
<i>Pyracantha koidzumii</i> (Hayata) Rehder (Formosan Firethorn)	S	2
<i>Pyrus calleryana</i> Decaisne (Bradford Pear)	T	3
<i>Quercus palustris</i> Muenchausen (Pin Oak)	T	1
<i>Quercus virginiana</i> P. Miller (Live Oak)	T	10
<i>Rosa multiflora</i> Thunberg ex Murray (Multiflora Rose)	S	15
<i>Tsuga canadensis</i> (L.) Carrière (Eastern Hemlock)	T	1
<i>Wisteria sinensis</i> (Sims) A.P. de Candolle (Chinese Wisteria)	V	4
<i>Zelkova serrata</i> Thunberg (Zelkova)	T	1
Subtotal	T=18; S=12; V=5	175
TOTAL	T=43; S=12; V=10	355

<sup>a</sup> T=Tree; S=Shrub; V=Vine. See text for full definitions.  
<sup>b</sup> See text for full explanation.  
<sup>c</sup> See text for full explanation.

# 2021 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

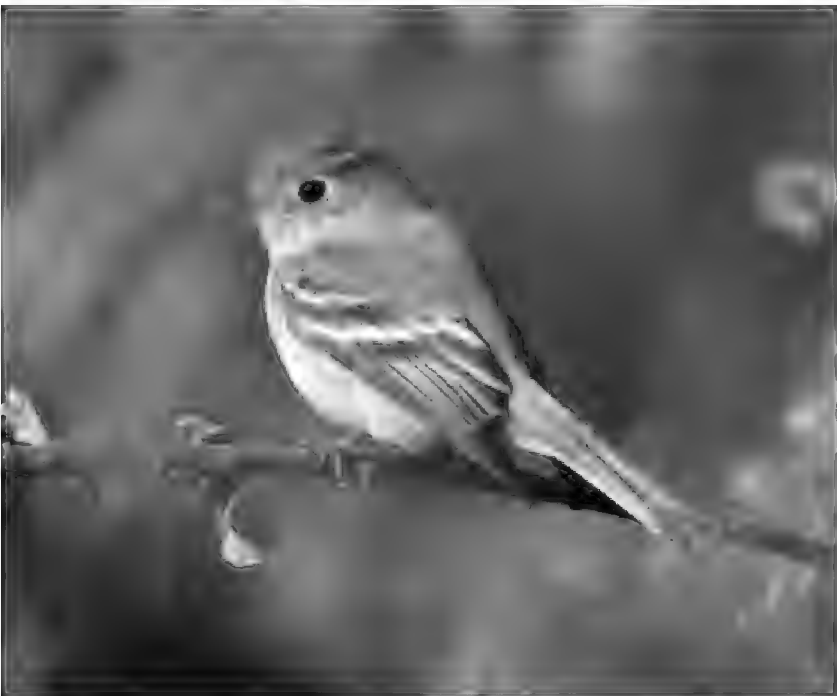
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Steven Shultz <sup>1</sup>, Chair, Lucas Bobay, C. Wilson Cook, J. Edward Corey  
Henry E. Link, Martina A. Nordstrand, Joshua L. Southern,  
Z. Taylor Piephoff, Jeffrey S. Pippen  
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The make-up of the 2021 North Carolina Bird Records Committee (NCBRC) included additions of Lucas Bobay, Josh Southern, and Jeffrey S. Pippen as voting members, and the retention of Richard J. Davis and Harry E. LeGrand Jr. in advisory capacities. Jan J. Hansen, Nathan A. Swick, and Andrew K. Thornton rotated off the Committee for at least a one-year hiatus.

**Accepted as Valid.** The following reports were judged to be acceptable.

**Hammond’s Flycatcher** (*Empidonax hammondii*) (20-23). An *Empidonax* flycatcher identified as Hammond’s Flycatcher was captured on private property in *Randolph* County and banded by John Gerwin, et al, of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences on 12 December 2020. The NCBRC considered the record and voted to accept the record 7-1 (Inadequately Documented), with 1 abstention. But because the report received 2 non-acceptance votes, it required review from outside the committee and subsequent recirculation with these outside opinions or any additional comments or photos from other observers. During the period in which the report was circulated for outside review, a detailed sight report with photographs was received from Derb Carter. Upon second ballot, the NCBRC reviewed and accepted (6 Accept, 3 Abstain) the report. This represents a 1<sup>st</sup> state record and, by virtue of photos, places Hammond’s Flycatcher on the Definitive List.



*Hammond’s Flycatcher,  
9 January 2021,  
Randolph County, NC.  
Photograph by Derb  
Carter.*

**Common Raven** (*Corvus corax*) (21-05) The NCBRC reviewed multiple eBird reports of a Common Raven seen and photographed at Oregon Inlet and Cape Hatteras in *Dare* County between 17-24 April 2021. While common in the mountains and uncommon in the piedmont, this is the first documented record of the species along the immediate coast in nearly 90 years! Observers noted that the bird displayed a broken primary feather that allowed for confirmation that a single bird was responsible for sightings in both locations. The reports were accepted unanimously (9-0).

**Yellow-green Vireo** (*Vireo flavoviridis*) (21-06) The NCBRC reviewed and unanimously accepted (9-0) eBird reports of a Yellow-green Vireo from Nags Head Woods Ecological Preserve in *Dare* County from 14-15 May 2021. Committee members lamented the lack of submitted documentation outside of eBird reports, for such a rare bird, resulting in a somewhat unsatisfying way to add this species to the NC list. This represents a 1<sup>st</sup> state record and, by virtue of photos, places Yellow-green Vireo on the Definitive List.



*Yellow-Green Vireo,  
15 May 2021,  
Dare County, NC.  
Photo by Jeff Lewis.*

**Magnificent Frigatebird** (*Fregata magnificens*) (21-09) The NCBRC unanimously accepted (9-0) an eBird report with photographs from Nathaniel Axtell of a female Magnificent Frigatebird from *Transylvania* County on 8 January 2021. This may be the only report of Magnificent Frigatebird from the state found during a snow shower!

**Painted Bunting** (*Passerina ciris*) (21-11) The NCBRC unanimously accepted (9-0) an eBird report with photographs from Emilie Travis of a non-adult Painted Bunting from *Graham* County on 13 May 2021. While a breeder along the coast, this species is very rarely encountered in the mountains.

**Townsend's Solitaire** (*Myadestes townsendi*) (21-13) The NCBRC reviewed and accepted (6 Accept, 3 Abstain) an eBird report with photographs of a Townsend's Solitaire from Clingman's Dome Swain County on 10 October 2021. While details were scant, committee members felt that the photographs, while distant, were diagnostic. This represents the 2<sup>nd</sup> accepted record for the state, both from the mountain region.

**Not Accepted.** The following reports were judged to be not accepted.

**Bohemian Waxwing** (*Bombycilla garrulus*) (21-01) A sight report of twelve Bohemian Waxwings from the northern Coastal Plain was not accepted by a vote of 0-9 (6 Unacceptable Sighting, 3 Inadequately Documented). Committee members felt this report pertained to the common Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*).

**Clark's Grebe** (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) (21-02) A report with photograph of a deceased bird from the central coast was not accepted by the committee by a vote of 0-9 (5 Inadequately Documented, 4 Unacceptable Sighting). Some committee members noted the difficulty in identifying the partially decomposed remains, while others identified the bird as a Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*).

**Lazuli Bunting** (*Passerina amoena*) (21-03) A spring sight report from the northern mountains was not accepted by the committee on a vote of 3-6 (5 Inadequately Documented, 1 Unacceptable Sighting). Committee members felt that the report, while compelling, ultimately failed to provide the level of detail needed to accept.

**Tricolored Blackbird** (*Agelaius tricolor*) (21-04) A late winter sight report from the central piedmont was not accepted by the committee on a vote of 0-9 (7 Unacceptable Sighting, 2 Inadequately Documented). Committee members felt this report pertained to the expected Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*). Tricolored Blackbird is essentially a sedentary species restricted to the Pacific Coast from Washington through Baja California Norte.

**White-tailed Tropicbird** (*Phaethon lepturus*) (21-08) The NCBRC reviewed an eBird report from Coquina Beach Dare County on 9 December 2020 of a White-tailed Tropicbird. The report received an equal number of votes, 4-4 (Inadequately Documented ) with one abstention, on the first ballot. The report was not accepted on the second ballot 3-6 (3 Accept, 3 Inadequately Documented, 3 Abstain).

**Bell's Vireo** (*Vireo bellii*) (21-10) A December 2020 sight report from the southern mountains was not accepted by the committee on a vote of 3-6 (5 Inadequately Documented, 1 Unacceptable Sighting). Committee members felt this report could have been correct but did not adequately eliminate more expected species.

**Painted Redstart** (*Myioborus pictus*) (21-12) A fall sight report from the piedmont was not accepted by the committee 1-8 (1 Accept, 3 Unacceptable Sighting, 2 Inadequately Documented, 3 Abstain). Committee members felt this report did not adequately eliminate more likely species, and that the scant detail did not serve to document what would be a 2<sup>nd</sup> record of this species for the state.

### Summary

With this round of voting, Yellow-green Vireo and Hammond's Flycatcher are added to the Definitive List.

Due to the split of Mew Gull into Common Gull (*Larus canus*) and Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*) (62<sup>nd</sup> Supplement, July 2021, AOU Check-list of North American Birds), Common Gull replaces Mew Gull on the Definitive list, and Short-billed Gull, based on a single sight report, is added to the Provisional list.

The total number of accepted species from North Carolina is now **493** of which 479 are Definitive, two are considered Not Established, and 12 are Provisional. The full lists may be found at [www.carolinabirdclub.org/brc/](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/brc/)

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# BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Fall 2021, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.*

<i>Winter</i>	<i>December 1–February 28</i>	<i>due March 20</i>
<i>Spring</i>	<i>March 1–May 31</i>	<i>due June 20</i>
<i>Summer</i>	<i>June 1–July 31</i>	<i>due August 20</i>
<i>Fall</i>	<i>August 1–November 30</i>	<i>due December 20</i>

*Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location) and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.*

*Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.*

*Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.*

*I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.*

*If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.*

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **BRP** – Blue Ridge Parkway, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **Ln** – Lane, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

*All italicized place names are counties.*

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** A total of 17, 14 adults and three chicks were seen on private land in southeastern *Hyde* NC, where breeding was first confirmed in late July, 9 Aug (Matt Janson). Farthest inland was one at Lake Twitty *Union* NC 9-10 Aug (Dennis Kent, m. obs.) and three in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 17 Aug (Henry Link, m. obs.).

**Snow Goose:** Six in flight over Bear Island WMA *Colleton* SC 16 Oct (Rose & Tony Johnson) were somewhat early for a site so far south.

**Ross's Goose:** Sightings included one at the pond along US-64 near the border of *Tyrrell* and *Washington* NC 8-13 Nov (Chris Gearhart, m. obs.), two at a small pond near Mid-Pines Rd *Wake* NC 23-27 Nov (Phil Doerr, Dale Lambert, m. obs.), and three at Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 20 Nov (Nathaniel Axtell, m. obs.).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** One had returned to Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC by 1 Oct (Greg Hudson).

**American Wigeon:** A drake on New Field Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 29 Aug (Laura Jenkins) was somewhat early.

**Ring-necked Duck:** The pair seen intermittently through the summer in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC continued through at least 3 Sep (Ron Ahle). A drake continued at New River SP *Ashe* NC from 25 Jun (Joseph Johnson) through 15 Aug (Richard Gray).

**Common Eider:** Two hens apparently spent the entire summer around Beaufort Harbor *Carteret* NC, seen from late spring through 16 Jul and again 13 Sep (Caleb Bronsink).

**Surf Scoter:** Several inland sightings were made in November including two on Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 3 Nov (Vince Kloster), one on Lake Hickory *Alexander* and *Catawba* NC 4 Nov (Caroline Martin), one at the Goldsboro WTP *Wayne* NC 7 Nov (Ricky Davis), one at Milliken Arboretum *Spartanburg* SC 15 Nov (Louise Ridlon), and two on Lake Hartwell *Pickens* SC 29 Nov (Kevin Kubach).

**White-winged Scoter:** Two on the White Oak Creek arm of Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 10 Nov (Margaretta Yarborough) was the only inland report made this fall.

**Black Scoter:** Inland sightings included four hens on Lake Hickory *Alexander* and *Catawba* NC 4 Nov (Dwayne Martin, Lori Owenby, m. obs.), one hen on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 21 Nov (Jeff Lemons, et al.), and two hens on Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 24 Nov (Steve Patterson).

**Long-tailed Duck:** Three on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 27 Nov (Henry Link, m. obs.) were unusual for the Piedmont region.

**Common Merganser:** Several sightings of family groups of female/immature-type birds provided more evidence of breeding along rivers in the NC mountains—six on Shelton Laurel Creek in *Madison* NC 16 Aug (Lance Jessee), four on the Watauga River near Valle Crucis *Watauga* NC 5 Sep (Maxwell Ramey, m. obs.), ten on the North Toe River in Spruce Pine *Mitchell* NC 18 Sep (Thomas McNeil), 16 on the Oconaluftee River in *Swain* NC 7 Oct (Lauren Vaughn, m. obs.), and six on Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 3-5 Nov (Timothy Carstens, m. obs.).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** One in the South Cove arm of Lake Keowee *Oconee* SC 24 Aug through 6 Sep (Stephen Schutt, m. obs.) was rather early for an inland site.

**Horned Grebe:** One near the dam on Thurmond Reservoir *Abbeville* SC 18 Aug (Steve Patterson, Scott Harris) and 3 Sep (Matthew Campbell, et al.) was rather early.

**Eared Grebe:** Two were seen at the Goldsboro WTP *Wayne* NC 2-8 Nov (Eric Dean, m. obs.). WTPs seem to attract this species more than any other type of site in the Carolinas.

**White-winged Dove:** One visited a yard with feeders in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC that has intermittently hosted this species since 2013, this year 21 Aug, 20 Sep, and 30 Oct (Deb Winter). Two were photographed on powerlines in Folly Beach *Charleston* SC 31 Oct (Michael Harhold). Individuals were seen at seven other sites this fall, all along the coast, from 24 Oct through 16 Nov (m. obs.).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** An adult seen feeding two juveniles at Anderson Point Park *Wake* NC 26 Sep (Marc Ribaud) provided a rather late breeding report. Latest to depart this fall was one at River Park North in Greenville *Pitt* NC 14 Nov (Trevor Sleight), one captured at a banding station on East Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 14 Nov (Josh Lefever, Nathaniel Watkins), and a moribund individual found in a yard in Sneads Ferry *Onslow* NC 29 Nov (Gilbert Grant).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Latest to depart this fall was one seen on Bulls Island at Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC during a shorebird survey 26 Oct (Josh Lefever, David McLean, Nathaniel Watkins).

**Lesser Nighthawk:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of a Lesser Nighthawk seen in flight around the causeway to Figure Eight Island *New Hanover* NC 25 Nov and 16 Dec (Derb Carter). If accepted, the report would provide the second record of this species in NC, the first a moribund bird in Carteret in Dec 1998.

**Chimney Swift:** One photographed along the Pitt St Causeway *Charleston* SC 7 Nov (Pam Ford, Craig Watson) was late.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Two, an adult male and a female, photographed in a yard in Burlington *Alamance* NC 5 Nov (Rhonda Weiss) were rather late for a site in the Piedmont.

**Rufous Hummingbird:** A female, likely one of the two that wintered at the park last year, returned to the Bean Tract of Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC by 17 Aug (Dwayne Martin).

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird:** Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs and measurements of an apparent Broad-tailed Hummingbird mist-netted during a banding operation at Hilton Pond *York* SC 20 Sep (Bill Hilton Jr.). If accepted, the report would provide SC with its first record of this vagrant from the American west.

**Clapper Rail:** One photographed in a parking lot in Apex *Wake* NC 20 Sep (Natalie Barbour, m. obs.) and a moribund individual photographed in southern *Cumberland* NC 14 Nov (Jarrett Stephens) were likely forced down by inclement weather while migrating.

**Virginia Rail:** Individuals on private property in *Lincoln* NC 9 Sep (Jeff Turner) and along the Cottonwood Trail *Spartanburg* SC 23 Oct (Simon Harvey, m. obs.) were firsts for those counties.

**Sora:** Individuals in Holly Springs *Wake* NC 9-13 Nov (Lawrence Zoller, m. obs.) and in a yard in northwestern *Richland* SC 14 Nov (Hilda Flamholtz) were somewhat late for those inland sites.

**Common Gallinule:** One photographed on a small pond in Indian Trail *Union* NC 28 Nov (Chris Huffstickler, Dennis Kent, m. obs.) was a first for that county.

**American Avocet:** Inland sightings involved one at Lake Adger *Polk* NC 31 Aug (Cheryl Day), one on Shelley Lake *Wake* NC 2 Sep (Karen & Joe Bearden, m. obs.), and two in the Ellerbe Creek arm of Falls Lake *Durham* NC 8 Sep (Matt Lawing, Jim Capel).

**Black-bellied Plover:** 16 at the Super Sod farm along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC following the passage of Tropical Storm Fred 18 Aug (Bill Hooker, Mike Resch) was a notable count for the mountain region. One amongst Killdeer in a field in southeastern *Union* NC 7 Nov (Martina Nordstrand) was a first for that county.

**American Golden-Plover:** One or more were seen at the Super Sod farm in *Orangeburg* SC 3-17 Sep (Carl & Cathy Miller, m. obs.) with a high count of three made on 17 Sep (John Cox). One photographed in South Mills *Camden* NC 26 Sep (Marie & Ron Furnish) was a first for that county. One photographed on Max Patch Bald *Madison* NC, at 4500 feet above sea level, 10 Oct (Charlotte Strickland) was very unusual for such a high elevation. A relatively large flock was seen in an agricultural area just north of Pageland *Chesterfield* SC 7-15 Nov (Greg Hays, Chris Huffstickler, Dennis Kent, m. obs.) with a high count of 18 on 8 Nov (Huffstickler, Martina Nordstrand). Nine also strayed into neighboring *Union* NC on 8 Nov (Huffstickler, Kent, Nordstrand). These sightings were the first of this species in either county. Individuals were also seen at several other sites scattered across the Carolinas, mostly September through mid-October.

**Pacific Golden-Plover:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of a Pacific Golden-Plover on the lawn next to the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center *Dare* NC 5-9 Aug (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.). One wonders if this bird was the same individual seen around the Salt Pond at Cape Point through 30 Jul.



*Pacific Golden-Plover, Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, Dare County, NC, 6 Aug 2021.  
Photograph by Jeff Lewis.*

**Semipalmated Plover:** Sightings were made at multiple inland sites from late August through mid-September. A few of the higher inland counts were eight at Price Lake *Watauga* NC 31 Aug (Steve Dowlan), 12 along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 1 Sep (Kevin Burke), and four in *York* SC 6 Sep (Gretchen Locy, et al.).

**Upland Sandpiper:** Sightings were made 13 Aug through 12 Sep. High counts included four at the Beaufort Airport *Carteret* NC 19-20 Aug (Marty Wall, m. obs.), seven at Vandemark Sod *Nash* NC 22 Aug (Ricky Davis), four at the Manteo Airport *Dare* NC 28 Aug (Larry Chen, Sarah Toner), and two at Dalzell unit of Modern Turf *Sumter* SC 29 Aug (Matt Malin, m. obs.).

**Whimbrel:** One photographed at the Kathwood Ponds at Silver Bluff Audubon *Aiken* SC 9 Aug (Gip Young, et al.) was a great find for a site away from the coast.

**Long-billed Curlew:** Sightings included one on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC intermittently throughout the period (m. obs.), one at Edingsville Beach *Colleton* SC 10

Aug (Cat Hahn), one at the Rachel Carson Reserve *Carteret* NC 10 Sep (John Fussell, Georgia Minnich), two on East Shackleford Banks 26 Sep (Fussell, et al.), up to four at the southern end of Edisto Island *Charleston* SC 20-23 Oct (Jeremy Ross, Keith Watson, m. obs.), and one at New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 17-18 Nov (John Lynch, m. obs.).

**Bar-tailed Godwit:** Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Bar-tailed Godwit at the tidal lagoon at The Ocean Course (restricted access) on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 25 Oct (Josh Lefever, Nathaniel Watkins, et al.). The bird continued there into winter (m. obs.), though access to the site, a private golf club, proved challenging for most. The long-continuing individual on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC was seen 19 Sep and 26 Sep (John Fussell, et al.).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** One photographed at Governors Island on Lake Norman *Lincoln* NC 25 Sep (Jeff Lemons, et al.) was a great find for an inland site and a first for the western NC Piedmont. Sightings made along the coast included two photographed in flight over North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 23 Sep (Jonathan Cooley), one at North Pond 10-12 Oct (Simon Thompson, m. obs.), one on South Pond at Pea Island NWR 30 Oct (Matthew Withrow, m. obs.), one at the northern end of Pawleys Island *Georgetown* SC 16 Nov (Byron Swift), and, probably the same individual, in neighboring Litchfield Beach 20-30 Nov (Paul Serridge, m. obs.).

**Marbled Godwit:** One at the upper end of Lake Wheeler *Wake* NC 2 Oct (Dale Lambert) was a great find for an inland site.

**Ruddy Turnstone:** Following the passage of Tropical Storm Fred, four were seen along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 18 Aug (James Poling), and one was seen in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 18 Aug (Henry Link, m. obs.). Six were seen at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 9 Sep (Ann Brice).

**Ruff:** One at New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 15 Sep (John Lynch) was the only one reported this fall.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** Five at Stegall Lake in Marshville *Union* NC 3 Aug (Dennis Kent, m. obs.) were notable for that area. Four at Lake Adger *Polk* NC 17 Aug (Bill Hooker, Mike Resch), one at the Bonsal Tailings Reservoir in *Anson* NC 23 Aug (Chris Huffstickler), and one at Parr Shoals Reservoir *Fairfield* SC 6 Sep (Debra & Steve Patterson) were firsts for those counties. One at Price Lake *Watauga* NC when drained 26 Aug through 1 Sep (Andrew Wolf, m. obs.) was a first for that county and the entire NC High Country.

**Sanderling:** Individuals at Price Lake *Watauga* NC when drained 1 Sep (Steve Dowlan, Will Bennett, m. obs.) and at Lake Ed Johnson *Spartanburg* SC 17-22 Sep (*fide* Paul Serridge) were firsts for those counties. Three along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 1 Sep (Vicky Burke, et al.) were notable for the mountain region.

**Dunlin:** One in southeastern *Union* NC 7 Nov (Martina Nordstrand) was a first for that county. One in *Pickens* SC 18 Nov (Kevin Kubach) and two at Coddle Creek Reservoir *Cabarrus* NC through 3 Dec (Randy McCarthy) were somewhat late for sites in the Piedmont.

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Sightings included one at Sandhill Turf *Montgomery* NC 23-24 Aug (Chris Huffstickler, m. obs.), two at Super Sod along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 1-3 Sep (Kevin Burke, m. obs.), one at Stegall Lake in Marshville *Union* NC 2-6 Sep (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.), one in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 2-6 Sep (Paul Sumner, Matt Wangerin, m. obs.), one in the Ellerbe Creek arm of Falls Lake *Durham* NC 3-4 Sep (Bruce Young, m. obs.), one at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 7-17 Sep (Jeff Tell, m. obs.), two at a small pond in *York* SC 12 Sep (Gretchen Locy), one at Salem Lake *Forsyth* NC 2-8 Oct (John Haire, m. obs.), and one on North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 10 Oct (Simon Thompson, et al.). The sightings in *Montgomery* NC, *Union* NC, and *York* SC were first for those counties.

**Least Sandpiper:** 35 along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 18 Aug (Mike Resch) and 33 at Price Lake *Watauga* NC when drained 31 Aug (Steve Dowlan) were good counts for the mountain region.

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** One at Sandhill Turf *Montgomery* NC 2 Sep (Martina Nordstrand) was a first for that county.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** One seen and photographed in a campground in Pineola *Avery* NC, at 3660 feet above sea level, 3-6 Sep (Malia Kline, m. obs.) was very unusual for that high elevation and a first for that county. Other sightings this fall were more typical. Counts of two were made at several sod farms—at Sandhill Turf *Montgomery* NC 2 Sep (Martina Nordstrand), at Super Sod in *Orangeburg* SC 3-27 Sep (Matt Malin, Harold Donnelly, m. obs.), at Super Sod along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 21 Sep (Kevin Burke), and at Modern Turf in Rembert *Sumter* SC 28 Sep (Irvin Pitts, Mac Williams). Sightings away from sod farms included one at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 29 Aug (Brad Benter) and 4 Sep (David Amini), two in the Ellerbe Creek arm of Falls Lake *Durham* NC 31 Aug (Ben Graham, et al.), one on East Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 8-15 Sep (Josh Lefever, m. obs.), and one in Clemson *Pickens* SC 13 Sep (Steve Patterson).

**Western Sandpiper:** Two at Price Lake *Watauga* NC when drained 1 Sep (Steve Dowlan, Will Bennett, Guy McGrane), with one continuing through 7 Sep (m. obs.), were a first for that county and the entire NC High Country. Individuals at Salem Lake *Forsyth* NC 5-12 Oct (John Haire, m. obs.) and at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 7 Nov (Ricky Davis) were somewhat late for those sites away from the coast.

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** Inland sightings included one to two at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 3-31 Aug (Brooks Garrett, George McHenry, m. obs.), one to five along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 18 Aug through 4 Sep (James Poling, m. obs.), seven in northeastern Greenville *Pitt* NC 1 Sep (Howard Vainright), eight at the upper end of Lake Wheeler *Wake* NC 3 Sep (Dale Lambert), one in *York* SC 6 Sep (Gretchen Locy, et al.), and six in



the Ellerbe Creek arm of Falls Lake *Durham* NC 28 Sep (Angie Holt). One at Price Lake *Watauga* NC when drained 1 Sep (Sheryl McNair, m. obs.) was especially unusual for the NC High Country.

**Willet:** One at the Modern Turf farm in Rembert *Sumter* SC 22 Aug (Shawn Smolen-Morton, Mac Williams) was a first for that county.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** Individuals were seen at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 31 Jul through 6 Sep (Jeff Tell, m. obs.) and at Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC 1-6 Sep (Jay Chandler, m. obs.).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** Inland sightings involved one at Lake Benson Park *Wake* NC 17 Aug (Marc Ribaud), one at Silver Bluff Audubon *Aiken* SC 31 Aug (Mary Jo Dawson), two in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 2-5 Sep (Paul Sumner, Matt Wangerin, m. obs.), and one at Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC 16 Sep (Jay Chandler).

**Parasitic Jaeger:** Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of one on the Savannah River at Russell Dam *Abbeville* SC, following the passage of Tropical Storm Fred, 17 Aug (Matthew Campbell).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent immature Black-legged Kittiwake on Lake Hickory *Catawba* NC 2-3 Nov (Caroline Martin, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the third record for the NC Piedmont. Interestingly, the second accepted Piedmont record came from the same site Nov 2017.

**Sabine's Gull:** Individuals were seen and photographed on two pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC this fall—an adult in nearshore waters 28 Aug (Brian Patteson, Ed Corey, et al.) and an immature bird being harassed by an immature Long-tailed Jaeger 2 Oct (Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).



*Sabine's Gull and Long-tailed Jaeger, off Hatteras, Dare County, NC, 2 Oct 2021. Photograph by Kate Sutherland.*

**Bonaparte's Gull:** One photographed on the beach in Emerald Isle *Carteret* NC 9 Aug (Jack Adams) was rather early.

**Franklin's Gull:** Individuals were seen at the Ocean Isle Beach WTP *Brunswick* NC 15-27 Nov (Bill Hooker, Taylor Piephoff, m. obs.) and at New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 20 Nov (John Lynch).

**Heermann's Gull:** Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent winter-plumaged-adult Heermann's Gull on the beach at Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC 30 Sep (Fred Fahmy). This sighting, SC's second, comes only three months after its first, a breeding-plumaged-adult photographed at nearby Hunting Island SP 21 Jun (Tammy Hester). Both reports, along with multiple reports from neighboring Tybee Inland Georgia 15 Feb intermittently through 17 Oct, all likely involve the same individual.

**California Gull:** One photographed at Cape Point *Dare* NC 29 Nov (Brian Patteson) was a great find.



*California Gull, Cape Point, Buxton, Dare County, NC, 29 Nov 2021. Photograph by Brian Patteson.*

**Herring Gull:** Four seen in flight near Brevard *Transylvania* NC 25 Nov (Nathaniel Axtell) was a notable count for the mountain region.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Up to 1000 around the southern point of Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC in mid-October (Peter Vankevich) was a notable concentration.

**Great Black-backed Gull:** One at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC following the passage of Tropical Storm Fred 18 Aug (John Carter) was the inland-most report this fall.

**Sooty Tern:** Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of ten Sooty Terns on the Savannah River at Russell Dam *Abbeville* SC, following the passage of Tropical Storm Fred, 17 Aug (Matthew Campbell).

**Least Tern:** Individuals at Silver Bluff Audubon *Aiken* SC 13 Aug (Carol Eldridge, m. obs.) and in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC, following the passage of Tropical Storm Fred, 19 Aug (Joe Donahue, m. obs.) were firsts for those counties.

**Gull-billed Tern:** 332 at Davis Impoundment *Carteret* NC, a traditional post-breeding gathering site for the species, 15 Aug (Amiel Hopkins, m. obs.) was a notable count.

**Caspian Tern:** 19 at Falls Lake in *Durham* NC 13 Oct (Lori White, et al.) was a notable count for the Piedmont in mid-October.

**Black Tern:** Five to six on Fishing Creek Lake *Chester* and *Lancaster* SC 15 Aug (Greg Hays) were a first for either county. 14 at Lake Wylie *York* SC 16 Aug (Chris Huffstickler) and 13 at Oak Hollow Lake *Guilford* NC 19 Aug (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.) were notable counts for those sites. Eight at Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 31 Aug (Aaron Steed, John Koon) was a notable count for the mountain region.

**Black Skimmer:** 2000 at Midway Inlet, between Litchfield Beach and Pawleys Island, *Georgetown* SC 24 Nov (Paul Serridge) was a notable concentration.

**White-tailed Tropicbird:** A sub-adult was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 20 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

**Red-throated Loon:** One on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 28 Nov (Jonathan Cantrell, Matt Spangler) was a good find inland.

**Northern Fulmar:** A light-morph individual seen and photographed on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 2 Oct (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was very early.

**Trindade Petrel:** A dark-morph individual was well seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 7 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.)

**Manx Shearwater:** One in flight off Southern Shores *Dare* NC 19 Nov (Jeff Lewis) was somewhat early for a from-shore sighting.

**Wood Stork:** Immature individuals in West Jefferson *Ashe* NC 7 Sep (Barbara Rowe) and in Marshall *Madison* NC 19 Sep (Steve Lambert) were unusual for the mountain region and firsts for those counties.

**Magnificent Frigatebird:** Two were seen and photographed in flight together over the southern end of Folly Island *Charleston* SC 22 Oct (Keenan Scott Freitas, Kristina Wheeler, et al.)

**Brown Booby:** This species was well-reported this fall. Sightings were made at two inland sites—on the Cooper River in southern *Berkeley* SC where an adult was seen and photographed 1 Aug (*fide* Craig Watson, Carl Miller, m. obs.) and on the Pee Dee River just south of Morrow Mountain SP *Montgomery* and *Stanly* NC where a juvenile bird was seen and photographed 12 Aug (*fide* Ben Graham), 27 Aug (Pam Palmer), and 6 Oct (Jon Carlsen). The latter sighting was reminiscent of a series of sightings along the Pee Dee and Catawba river systems in 2016 and 2020. Four, one adult and three juvenile birds, on an offshore tower 35 miles southeast of Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC 18 Sep (Christopher Brown, et al.) was a remarkable count for the Carolinas. Individuals were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 7 Aug and 28 Aug (Brian Patteson, et al.) and 12 miles off Cedar Island *Georgetown* SC 13 Aug (Wendy Allen). A subadult photographed resting on the beach at Cape Point *Dare* NC 29 Nov (Megan Baker, Michael Gosselin) was rather late.

**Great Cormorant:** One on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 28 Nov into winter (Ann Van Sant, Roberta Newton, Henry Link, m. obs.) was unusual for an inland site.

**American White Pelican:** Sightings began increasing in late September. Inland-most were two on Lake Keowee *Oconee* SC 19 Oct (Don Lenahan). 115 on the Pamlico River at the mouth of Broad Creek *Beaufort* NC 21 Oct (Kevin O’Kane) and 100 on the Neuse River at Fairfield Harbour *Craven* NC 20 Nov (Rob Tarkenton) were notable counts for those areas.

**Brown Pelican:** An immature bird photographed at Lake Wylie *York* SC 16 Aug (Chris Huffstickler, m. obs.) was unusual for an inland site.

**Great Blue Heron (white form):** A “Great White Heron” was seen and photographed at Harmon Field *Polk* NC 14-15 Nov (George Ivey, m. obs.)

**Snowy Egret:** Farthest inland this fall was one seen in flight over Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 16 Sep (Mike Resch).

**Tricolored Heron:** Farthest inland this fall were one to two at Kevin Lofton Riverfront Park *Gaston* NC 19 Aug through 2 Sep (Lee Weber, m. obs.), one at Lake Thom-A-Lex Park *Davidson* NC 29 Aug (Zach Lance), and one in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 5 Sep through 15 Oct (Paul Sumner, Matt Wangerin, m. obs.).

**Reddish Egret:** Three on Portsmouth Island *Carteret* NC 15-16 Aug (Amiel Hopkins) and four on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 12 Sep and 26 Sep (John Fussell, et al.) were good counts for NC.

**Cattle Egret:** 1300+ at the Modern Turf farm in Rembert *Sumter* SC 22 Aug (Shawn Smolen-Morton, Mac Williams) was a notable count. One photographed in a cattle pasture in Bakersville *Mitchell* NC 31 Oct (John Britt) was unusual for that area of the mountains and a first for that county.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** A juvenile bird photographed near Sylva *Jackson* NC 4 Aug (Rebekkah LaBlue, Nate Watkins) was unusual for the southwestern mountains and a first for that county.

**Roseate Spoonbill:** The epic post-breeding dispersal that began in July continued into fall at sites across the Piedmont and coastal plain. A few of the higher counts at sites in the Piedmont included five at the upper end of Brier Creek Reservoir *Wake* NC 14 Aug (David Fischer), three to five at the upper end of Lake Fisher *Rowan* 21 Aug through 3 Oct (m. obs.), and three in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt *Guilford* 21 Aug (Paul Sumner) through 10 Oct (Matt Wangerin). County firsts included one at Oak Valley Golf Club *Davie* NC 7-11 Aug (David & Susan Disher, m. obs.), three on Lake Surf *Moore* NC 16-19 Aug (m. obs.), two to three at Goat Island Park *Gaston* NC 21 Sep through 10 Oct (Steve Davria, m. obs.), one in flight over James City *Craven* NC 28 Sep (Ronnie Hewlette), and two at Kinston Nature Center *Lenoir* NC 25 Oct (Howard Vainright). High counts at sites along the coast included 17 at New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 31 Aug (John Lynch) and 28, a record high count for NC, at Twin Lakes in Sunset Beach *Brunswick* NC 26 Sep (Tony Lee). Farthest north along the coast were two at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 30 Sep through 12 Oct (Elizabeth Link, m. obs.). 100 on Dewees Island *Charleston* SC 7 Aug (Laura Caudill) was one of the higher counts made in SC.

**Swallow-tailed Kite:** Post-breeding dispersal continued into early fall with sightings far north and inland of the species' breeding grounds. One over Valle Crucis Community Park *Watauga* NC 20 Aug (David & Susan Disher) and ten along Tuttle Rd in *Stokes* NC 23 Aug (Tony & Cara Woods) were firsts for those counties. 13 over fields in Mills River *Henderson* NC 27 Aug (Kate Frost) provided a new record high count for a site in the mountain region. An immature bird video recorded in flight over Hartsville *Darlington* SC 12 Oct (Mac Williams) was very late to depart.

**Golden Eagle:** Individuals were seen at Caesars Head SP *Greenville* SC 3 Nov (Cheryl Day) and at Donnelley WMA *Colleton* SC 27 Nov (Peter Stangel)

**Northern Goshawk:** An immature bird was seen at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 11 Nov (Jeff Lewis).

**Mississippi Kite:** Post-breeding dispersal resulted in sightings at far-flung sites from late July to early September. Two observed hunting Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, one successfully, at Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC 17 Aug (Dwayne Martin, et al.) was an

interesting report. Four just southeast of Whittier *Jackson* NC 27 Aug (Timothy Carstens) were a first for that county.

**Snail Kite:** A GPS-tagged juvenile, originally tagged as a fledgling 10 Jun at Lake Kissimmee Florida, was tracked flying north through both states until the tag stopped transmitting near Broadwater Bridge Rd in Roseboro *Sampson* NC 2 Aug (*fide* Rob Fletcher). Fletcher says this bird flew continuously, only stopping between dawn and dusk, without any signs of foraging behavior north of Lake Jessup, Florida, 27 Jul through 2 Aug, and likely perished as a result.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** 2500 seen during a hawk-watch on Sassafras Mountain *Pickens* SC 25 Sep (Caroline Eastman) was a notable count.

**Merlin:** Nesting was suspected at two sites in the NC mountains in addition to the previously documented site at Land Harbor Lake— on the campus of Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk *Avery* NC, where a pair attempted nesting but failed in April (*fide* Alex Trifunovic) and three birds were seen together 23 Aug (Trifunovic) and at Mount Mitchell SP *Yancey* NC where a group of four birds, one adult and three juveniles, were seen 7 Aug (Clayton Gibb).

**Western Kingbird:** Three photographed in the same tree in the Ocean Park subdivision on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 29 Oct (Pam Ford, Carl & Cathy Miller, Craig Watson) was a remarkable sighting. Individuals were seen at six sites along or near the coast—on Edisto Island *Colleton* SC 9 Oct (Pam Ford, Craig Watson), along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 23 Oct (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.), at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 2-8 Nov (Michael Richmond, m. obs.), at White Oak Elementary School *Chowan* NC 18 Nov (Matt Janson), near Southport *Brunswick* NC 24 Nov (Ricky Davis), and along Goat Island Rd in *Clarendon* SC 30 Nov and 1 Dec (John Becker, Rebecca Jordan).

**Gray Kingbird:** Sightings involved one on a powerline in Emerald Isle *Carteret* NC 8 Aug (Christopher Esposito), two immature birds at Horsepen Point on Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC 3 Oct (Michael Lipford, m. obs.), one on a powerline along US-264 near Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 17 Oct (Jamie Adams), and one at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 19 Oct (Ritch Lilly).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** Individuals were seen and photographed on Pawleys Island *Georgetown* SC 15-16 Oct (Julie Davis, m. obs.) and at Ocracoke Campground on Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC 4 Nov (Lee Kimball, Tucker Scully).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Individuals were found at about a dozen sites in the Piedmont and mountain region from late August through early October. One photographed along the Cottonwood Trail *Spartanburg* SC 7 Sep (Neil Owens) was a first for that county.

**Alder/Willow Flycatcher:** 30 “Traill’s Flycatchers” were mist-netted and banded at the regular fall banding operation on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 20 Aug through 7 Oct (Josh Lefever, Nathaniel Watkins, et al.). These species are hard to detect and

differentiate in fall when non-vocal, and this volume of captures implies at least one of these two species migrate more regularly along the coast than the field data suggests. This volume of captures is not unusual for this banding operation, however. In fact, this year's total was somewhat low compared to recent years—59 “Traill's Flycatchers” were banded during the 2017 Fall season (fide Aaron Given).

**Empidonax sp.:** One seen, photographed, and recorded calling at Lake Busbee in Conway *Horry* SC 17 Nov into winter (Steve & Barb Thomas, Paul Serridge, m. obs.) was likely a Least Flycatcher.

**Say's Phoebe:** Two were found this fall—one along Zion Church Rd in southeastern *Union* NC 10-16 Oct (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.) and one along Howerton Rd in *Guilford* NC 16 Oct into winter (Jon Randolph, m. obs.). A one-and-a-half-hour overlap in sightings between the two sites on 16 Oct proved that the sites hosted different individuals. Both reports are pending review by the NC BRC—there are only two previous reports in NC outside of the coastal plain.

**Philadelphia Vireo:** One at Brumley Nature Preserve North *Orange* NC 30 Aug (Trenton Voytko) was somewhat early.

**Warbling Vireo:** Individual migrants were seen at six sites in the NC coastal plain 11 Sep to 11 Oct.

**Horned Lark:** 181 in the Dalzell unit of the Modern Turf farm in *Sumter* SC 4 Sep (Shawn Smolen-Morton, Mac Williams) was a notable count.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Two at Salem Lake *Forsyth* NC 15 Nov (John Haire) were somewhat late.

**Cave Swallow:** Two were seen on Figure Eight Island *New Hanover* NC 29 Nov (Derb Carter).

**Sedge Wren:** One at Valle Crucis Community Park *Watauga* NC 9-10 Oct (Steve Dowlan, m. obs.) was unusual for our northern mountains.

**Townsend's Solitaire:** The NCBRC accepted a report with photographs of a Townsend's Solitaire at Clingman's Dome *Swain* NC 10 Oct (Lexi Thomas). This is the second official record for NC, the first from a similar high-altitude site, Grandfather Mountain *Avery* NC, Sep-Oct 2015.

**Veery:** One mist-netted and banded on the west end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 24 Aug (Ben Stalheim, Nathaniel Watkins, et al.) was somewhat early for a site along our southern coast.



**Swainson's Thrush:** One photographed in *Mitchell* NC 13-14 Nov (John Britt) was rather late for the mountain region.

**Lapland Longspur:** Individuals were seen and photographed at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 18 Oct (Ronnie Hewlette, Kevin O'Kane) and along Mid-Pines Rd in *Wake* NC 9-10 Nov (John Patten Moss, m. obs.).

**Thick-billed Longspur:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Thick-billed Longspur around the southern end of the old Bonner Bridge at Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 22 Oct (Phil Lehman, Richard Korpi) through 29 Oct (m. obs.). If accepted, the record would provide the first record of this species anywhere in the Carolinas.



*Thick-billed Longspur, southern end of old Bonner Bridge, Dare County, NC, 23 Oct 2021. Photograph by Martina Nordstrand.*

**Snow Bunting:** One hung around the jetty on the southern side of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC for several weeks 10 Nov through 3 Dec (Rachael Veal, Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.).

**Lark Sparrow:** A report of two immature birds in northwestern *Lincoln* NC 9 Sep (Jeff Turner) was interesting, suggestive of possible breeding in that area. Individuals were seen at over a dozen sites along the coast and in the Piedmont this fall, mostly late August and September. Counts of two were had in the grassy area in front of the Bodie Island

Lighthouse *Dare* NC 27 Aug (Trenton Voytko) and at the northern end of Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 31 Aug through 3 Sep (Laura Jenkins, m. obs.). One near Ridgeville *Berkeley* SC 29 Sep (David McLean) was a first for that county. One returned to feeders in *Camden* NC for another winter by 9 Nov (James Harrison).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Individuals were seen at over a dozen sites this fall, most along the coast, mostly late September through late October. One near Brevard *Transylvania* NC 6 Sep (Michael Plauché, m. obs.) was somewhat early. Two were seen at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 28-30 Sep (Elizabeth Anderegg, Craig Watson). One photographed at the Grassy Mine Overlook, at 5200 feet above sea level, along the BRP in *Jackson* NC 30 Sep (Todd Arcos) was unusual for such a high elevation site. Two were mist-netted and banded on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC this fall—individuals on 27 Oct (Kandace Glanville, Ben Stalheim, et al.) and 16 Nov (Josh Lefever, Stalheim, et al.).

**Nelson's Sparrow:** One seen and photographed at Brookshire Park *Watauga* NC 7-12 Oct (Guy McGrane, m. obs.) was the only inland migrant reported this fall.

**Henslow's Sparrow:** One well-photographed along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 25 Oct (Vicky Burke) was a great find for the mountain region.

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** One photographed at the Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 24 Sep (Casey Girard) was the first to arrive this fall. Individuals were mist-netted and banded on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 20 Oct, 24 Oct, and 9 Nov (Josh Lefever, Kandace Glanville, et al.).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** One photographed at Charles and Ida Graham Park *Mecklenburg* NC 25 Nov (Andy Martin) was rather late for a site in the Piedmont.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Two were reported this fall—a female along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 24-25 Sep (Jeff Lewis) and a first-year male on Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC 26 Sep (Evangelyn Buckland) and 1 Oct (Sandy Bauers).

**Orchard Oriole:** A female/immature male photographed in a yard on Harbor Island *Beaufort* SC 16 Oct (Jenn Clementoni) was quite late. This species typically departs the Carolinas by mid-September.

**Bullock's Oriole:** An adult male visiting a feeder just southeast of Huntersville *Mecklenburg* NC 11 Nov into winter (Jeanie McCoy) was almost certainly the same individual that visited that feeder last winter, then an immature male.

**Northern Waterthrush:** Individuals seen at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 14 Nov (John Fussell, Curtiss Merrick) and mist-netted and banded on East Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 14 Nov (Josh Lefever, et al.) were somewhat late.

**Golden-winged Warbler x Blue-winged Warbler (F1 hybrid):** Individual “Brewster’s Warblers” were seen at Flat River Waterfowl Impoundment *Durham* NC 4 Sep (Will Bennett, Jon Bennett) and at Max Patch *Madison* NC 15 Oct (Clifton Avery).

**Swainson’s Warbler:** One mist-netted and banded on East Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 14 Oct (Josh Lefever, et al.) was somewhat late.

**Tennessee Warbler:** Individuals at Lake Lure *Rutherford* NC 21 Nov (Mike Resch) and at Maplewood Cemetery in *Durham* NC, where photographed, 26 Nov (Ben Jesup) were quite late.

**Nashville Warbler:** This species was very well-reported this fall, with sightings at multiple sites across the region in September and October.

**Connecticut Warbler:** Sightings involved an adult at the Ridge Junction Overlook along the BRP in *Yancey* NC 29 Aug (Clifton Avery, et al.) and 5 Sep (Kirk Gardner), an adult male seen in a yard in *Clarendon* SC 18-19 Sep (Rebecca Jordan), an immature bird photographed at Horseshoe Road Preserve *Granville* NC 24 Sep (Mike Manetz), an adult female photographed in Waves *Dare* NC 27 Sep (Karen Lebing), and an immature bird seen along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 4 Oct (Jeff Lewis).

**Mourning Warbler:** Individuals were reported at five sites in the NC mountains this fall, 8 Sep through 15 Oct. Two were mist-netted and banded on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC—immature individuals 10 Sep (Josh Lefever, et al.) and 13 Sep (Kandace Glanville, et al.).

**American Redstart:** An adult male seen along the Waynesville Greenway *Haywood* NC 16 Nov (Howard Browers) was rather late for the mountain region.

**Kirtland’s Warbler:** An immature bird was seen and photographed at Valle Crucis Community Park *Watauga* NC 30 Sep (*fide* Nate Swick) and 2-9 Oct (Max Ramey, m. obs.).

**Magnolia Warbler:** One at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 23 Aug (Greg Hays, Dennis Kent) was somewhat early for a site along the coast.

**Yellow Warbler:** One photographed in a yard in eastern *Randolph* NC 30 Nov (Ginger Walter) was quite late, especially for a site in the Piedmont region.

**Blackpoll Warbler:** One photographed at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 24 Nov (Doug Racine) was quite late.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** An adult male seen near Weaverville *Buncombe* NC 8 Nov (Liz Skiles) was rather late for the mountain region.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler (western race):** An “Audubon’s Warbler” was seen around the southern end of the old Bonner Bridge at Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 21 Nov through 4 Dec (Baxter Beamer, Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** A moribund bird found in downtown Raleigh *Wake* NC after a window-strike 5 Nov (*fide* John Gerwin) was rather late.

**Western Tanager:** A male returned to a yard in Columbia *Richland* SC for a second winter in a row 4 Nov (Alice Roberts Steinke). A female individual was photographed in a Juniper tree in Northlake *Anderson* SC 20 Nov (Daniel Cribb).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Individuals photographed in northeastern *Lexington* SC 21 Nov (Natalie Osborne Smith) and in southwestern *Mecklenburg* NC 24 Nov (Anthony Lombardino) were quite late.

**Blue Grosbeak:** Individuals lingered into November at a few sites along or near the coast. An adult male seen and audio-recorded along Lyle Creek in northeastern *Catawba* NC 25 Nov (Monroe Pannell) was quite late for a site in the Piedmont.

**Indigo Bunting:** An immature male photographed along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 20 Nov (Baxter Beamer, Martina Nordstrand) was late.

**Painted Bunting:** Farthest inland this fall was an adult female seen along Watchtower Rd in *Guilford* NC 10 Oct (Andrew Thornton).

**Dickcissel:** Individual migrants were reported at about two dozen sites from the mountains to the coast beginning in late August, but mostly mid-September through October.

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# Unusual Anthropogenic Nest Sites of Carolina Chickadee (*Poecile carolinensis*) in the Central Business District of Rockingham, Richmond County, North Carolina

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The Carolina Chickadee is one of the most common and widespread species in most of southeastern North America (Mostrum et al. 2002), including North Carolina (Mason et al. 2007, Seriff 2018, LeGrand et al. 2021). They readily occupy a variety of wooded habitats, including residential areas and parks in suburbia where this secondary-cavity nesting species breeds in natural nest sites and anthropogenic nest sites such as nest boxes (e.g., Davidson, NC; Stanback et al. 2009). Most documented anthropogenic nest sites used by Carolina Chickadees such as nest boxes, nest posts or poles, or nest tubes (Pitts 1998) and artificial snags (Grubb and Bronson 1995) have been constructed for explicit use by birds. However, Carolina Chickadees may infrequently use anthropogenic nest sites not deliberately constructed for use as nest sites, such as an open vertical steel pipe with a mounted stop sign along a street in Texas (Sialis 2017), an open vertical pipe beside the front porch of a house in Henderson County, NC (eBird 2021a), or an open top horizontal bar of a swinging metal gate in Missouri (eBird 2021b) and in Richmond County, NC (McNair, unpubl. data). These observations were in rural or suburban, not urban areas. Unusual anthropogenic nest sites in urban areas have not been described from central business districts of a city or town in North Carolina, where Carolina Chickadees occur in much lower breeding densities compared to many suburban areas (e.g., 14.7 territories/40 ha in Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem, NC; Thorington and Brand 2014). This field note documents two unusual anthropogenic nest sites of Carolina Chickadees and the context in which they were used in the central business district of Rockingham, Richmond County, NC, where chickadee breeding densities were low and nest boxes, nest posts or poles, or nest tubes were not present.

Carolina Chickadees were absent from the central business district of Rockingham (25-block study area of 42.4 ha; see McNair 2021 for full description and location of blocks) during the breeding season of 1994 but did nest nearby. The breeding density of Carolina Chickadees within the study area 27 years later was 3.3 territories/40 ha in 2021, when nest boxes, bird feeders, and bird baths were absent.

The only natural cavities present within the study area in 2021 were in dead tops of ~5 trees. One unpaired male Carolina Chickadee examined the very fresh entrance of a north-facing cavity located 0.45 m below the dead top of an 8.5 m tall water oak (*Quercus nigra*) in poor condition in Block 17 in late April and early May 2021. In addition, one pair frequently foraged along the northern boundary of the study area, but nested off-site within an adjacent wooded residential area with many mature trees.

The other two pairs of Carolina Chickadees present within the central business district of Rockingham in 2021 nested at two unusual anthropogenic nest sites. One pair nested in an active electric service mast that protruded through the roof of a commercial building in Block 19 (Figure 1). The other pair nested near the top of a security lamp pole on an unoccupied but landscaped property in the center of downtown Rockingham in Block 25 (Figures 2 and 3). I observed adults at both nest sites feeding young in late April and early May and young successfully fledged from at least the electric service mast nest site. I did not measure the diameters of the two cavity entrances, but they could be described as small at the electric service mast and large at the security lamp pole.



Figure 1. This active electric service mast that protruded 3 m above the roof of a single-floor commercial building in Block 19 was used as a nest-site by a pair of Carolina Chickadees (*Poecile carolinensis*) in 2021. Nest material can be seen extending from the bottom of the lower right hole (and lower left hole, difficult to observe in the photo), where one of the three insulated service entrance conductors enters one of the three larger circular apertures. However, the chickadees always entered the nest-site through the top aperture. Photograph taken on 9 May 2021 © D.B. McNair.

House Sparrows can compete for and usurp nest boxes of the Great Tit (*Parus major*) if the diameter of the cavity entrance exceeds 2.8 cm in Israel (Charter et al. 2013) and of the Carolina Chickadee if the diameter of the cavity entrance exceeds 3.2 cm in Tennessee (Pitts 1998). House Sparrows were common in downtown Rockingham where they only nested in anthropogenic nest sites, including active and abandoned electric service masts in both years (1994, 2021; McNair, unpubl. data). In 2021, when Carolina Chickadees were present, House Sparrows would have the potential to usurp nest sites of

the much smaller Carolina Chickadee if the latter species selected unusual anthropogenic nest sites at cavities with large entrance diameters. House Sparrows used five different electric service masts within four blocks in 2021, although not in the two blocks where Carolina Chickadees nested. Furthermore, masts used by House Sparrows had cavity entrances with larger diameters than the mast used by Carolina Chickadees, reducing or eliminating the threat of nest site usurpation. Carolina Chickadees are uncommon at best within the central business district of Rockingham, but despite potential usurpation of nest sites by House Sparrows, two pairs did nest at two unusual anthropogenic nest sites in downtown Rockingham where nest boxes were absent and natural cavities were scarce in 2021.



Figure 2. Carolina Chickadees nested at this tall (6.25 m) active security lamp pole on unoccupied but landscaped property in Block 25. Photograph taken on 9 May 2021 © D.B. McNair.





Figure 3. The active security lamp pole contained one large circular entrance 5.5 m above ground level, used by Carolina Chickadees, in a cone-shaped sub-terminal structure that supported the large light cap. Photograph taken on 9 May 2021 © D.B. McNair.

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### The Chat

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# BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Winter 2021-2022, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.*

<i>Winter</i>	<i>December 1–February 28</i>	<i>due March 20</i>
<i>Spring</i>	<i>March 1–May 31</i>	<i>due June 20</i>
<i>Summer</i>	<i>June 1–July 31</i>	<i>due August 20</i>
<i>Fall</i>	<i>August 1–November 30</i>	<i>due December 20</i>

*Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location) and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.*

*Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.*

*Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.*

*I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.*

*If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.*

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **CBC** – Christmas Bird Count, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

*All italicized place names are counties.*

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** Breeding was confirmed at another site southeast of Mattamuskeet NWR Hyde NC, just east of Gull Rock Game Land, where 11, three adults



and eight juveniles, were seen during its CBC 29 Dec (John Fussell) and into spring (m. obs.). According to the landowner, a pair of adults first arrived there in April 2021 and then successfully nested (*fide* Fussell). Twenty-four over an impoundment near Orton Pond *Brunswick* NC 13 Dec (Cole Tiemann) was a notable count for NC.

**Ross's Goose:** Eleven in flight over the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Washington* NC 11 Dec (Derb Carter) was this winter's high count. One in Bluffton *Beaufort* SC 6-10 Jan (Rose & Tony Johnson, m. obs.) was unusual for the southernmost part of our region. One in Ocracoke *Hyde* NC 26-28 Jan (Peter Vankevich, m. obs.) was unusual for that island.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Sightings were few and far between this winter with no sizable flocks reported. One in Meggett *Charleston* SC 27 Feb (Pam Ford, Craig Watson, m. obs.) was the southernmost report.

**Cackling Goose:** Individuals, possibly the same individual, photographed with Canada Geese near Poplar Branch *Currituck* NC 1-3 Dec (Matt Janson, m. obs.) and near Shiloh *Camden* NC 9 Jan (Will Burgoyne, et al.) were unusual for those counties in the northeastern corner of NC.

**Wood Duck:** 1570 at Orton Pond *Brunswick* NC 12 Jan (Cole Tiemann) was a notable concentration.

**Cinnamon Teal:** A drake was seen and photographed at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 14-17 Feb (Wendy Allen, m. obs.).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** Like most winters, one or two drakes were seen at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC and at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC intermittently throughout the period (m. obs.). A drake at Alligator River *Dare* NC 15 Feb (Greg Hudson) was somewhat unusual for that site. Three drakes photographed at Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center *Georgetown* SC during the Winyah Bay CBC 16 Dec (Aaron Given) was a notable count.





*Green-winged Teal (Eurasian) [with Green-winged Teal (American)], Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, Dare County NC, 8 Jan 2022. Photograph by Jeff Lewis.*

**Green-winged Teal (Eurasian):** After one was found at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 8 Jan (Jeff Lewis), two were seen at that site 20 Jan (Megan Baker, Michael Gosselin) and 5 Feb (Lewis, Liling Warren), and one continued there into spring (m. obs.).

**Common Eider:** Sightings were down compared to last winter. Eight off Kitty Hawk *Dare* NC during its CBC 18 Dec (Ricky Davis) was this winter's high count.

**Harlequin Duck:** A hen photographed along a jetty at Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 12 Dec (Jill & Ted Falasco, Andy Harrison, m. obs.) was the only one reported this winter.

**Surf Scoter:** Nine on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 15 Jan (Eddie Owens) was a notable count for an inland site. A hen on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 26 Jan (Tom Bush, Michael Plauché, et al.) was unusual for the mountain region in late winter.

**White-winged Scoter:** Individuals or pairs were reported on five lakes in the Piedmont region in the latter half of the period. Two on the southern end of Coddle Creek Reservoir *Cabarrus* NC 15 Jan (Mark McShane) were a first for that county.

**Black Scoter:** 5000 off Cape Point *Dare* NC 4 Dec (Jeff Lewis) was a notable count.

**Long-tailed Duck:** A hen on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 14-28 Feb (John Koon, m. obs.) was unusual for the mountain region. Three hens on Lake Wylie *York* SC 23 Dec (Cindy Stacy) were a first for that county. A hen on the May River in Palmetto Bluff *Beaufort* SC 24 Dec (Matt Spangler) was the southernmost report.

**Eared Grebe:** Two continued at the Goldsboro WTP *Wayne* NC from November through 21 Jan (Eric Dean) with one continuing through 19 Feb (Bob Butler, Simon Thompson).

**Western Grebe:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Western Grebe on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 27 Dec (Gretchen Locy, et al.) and, likely the same individual, on the southern end of Coddle Creek Reservoir *Cabarrus* NC 28 Dec through 7 Mar (Taylor Piephoff, m. obs.). Another individual was seen and photographed on the ocean in Buxton *Dare* NC 9-10 Feb (Frank Marengi, m. obs.).

**White-winged Dove:** One photographed in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 11 Jan (Irvin Pitts) was a great find for a site away from the coast and a first for that county.

**Lesser Nighthawk:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of a Lesser Nighthawk seen in flight over Figure Eight Island *New Hanover* NC 25 Nov and 16 Dec (Derb Carter). If accepted, the report would provide the second record of this species in NC. Any nighthawk sighting in the Carolinas between mid-November and April is incredibly rare.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** An adult female visiting a feeder in southern *Durham* NC 15 Dec through at least 20 Feb (Julia Storm) was unusual for the Piedmont region in winter.

**Black-chinned Hummingbird:** An immature male visited a feeder near Lake Wheeler *Wake* NC 10 Jan through 21 Feb (Cindy Ramsey) and was banded 12 Jan (Susan Campbell).

**Rufous Hummingbird:** Individuals were reported at about eight sites this winter. An immature female visiting a feeder near Weaverville *Buncombe* NC 12 Oct through 8 Mar (Krista Kelly, m. obs.) was unusual—Rufous Hummingbirds do not typically make it through the entire winter at sites in the mountain region.

**Allen's Hummingbird:** A female visited a feeder in southern *Mecklenburg* NC for a second winter in a row, recaptured 16 Feb (Susan Campbell). Regrettably for birders, there is no public access to this site.

**Clapper Rail:** A moribund individual photographed after a presumed building-strike in *Greenwood* SC 5 Jan (Chris Contakos) was a first for the Piedmont region in winter.

Though migrant Clapper Rails are occasionally found at inland sites, all previous records are from spring or fall. 83 in *Beaufort* SC during the Hilton Head Island CBC 15 Dec (*fide* Susan Murphy) was a record number for that count and the highest total on any Audubon CBC this year.

**Virginia Rail:** Individuals at Jackson Park *Henderson* NC 5 Jan (Kevin Burke) and at Enka Lake *Buncombe* NC 21-25 Jan (Clayton Gibb, m. obs.) were unusual for the mountain region in winter.

**Common Gallinule:** One continuing at a pond in Indian Trail *Union* NC from 28 Nov through 12 Dec (Dennis Kent, m. obs.) was unusual for a site outside of the coastal plain in winter.

**Sandhill Crane:** 28 photographed in flight over Boone *Watauga* NC 18 Feb (Guy McGrane) was a notable count for the northern mountain region, likely the same flock of 28 photographed in northern *Greenville* SC the following day 19 Feb (Shelby Birch, Donnie Coody). 14 in flight over central *Cumberland* NC during its CBC 16 Dec (Kim Brand, et al.) were unusual for that area. The high count in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC this winter was 67 on 17 Jan (Andrew Lydeard).

**Bar-tailed Godwit:** The individual discovered in a tidal lagoon at The Ocean Course (restricted access) on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 25 Oct (Josh Lefever, Nathaniel Watkins, et al.) continued at that site throughout the winter and into spring (m. obs.).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** Individuals at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 3-20 Dec (Mary & Ralph Erickson, m. obs.) and in Litchfield Beach *Georgetown* SC 16 Nov through 7 Jan (Byron Swift, m. obs.) were late.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** One on Eagle Island (restricted access) *Brunswick* NC during the Wilmington CBC 1 Jan (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis) was unusual for NC in winter.

**Dunlin:** One at McAlpine WTP *Mecklenburg* NC 9 Feb (Jeff Lemons, et al.) was unusual for the Piedmont region in late winter.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 16 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 10 Dec (Steve Calver) were a great find for winter.

**Short-billed/Long-billed Dowitcher:** A dowitcher, likely a Long-billed Dowitcher, photographed in the Ellerbe Creek arm of Falls Lake *Durham* NC 4 Dec (Noah Rokoske) was somewhat late for either species at a site away from the coast.

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Farthest inland this winter were individuals at Lyman Lake *Spartanburg* SC 18 Dec (Francis Brady, et al.), at High Rock Dam *Rowan* NC, where photographed, 27 Dec (Louisa Arendt), and at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC throughout the period (m. obs.).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** One at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 30 Dec (Steve Calver) was a great find for winter.

**Great Skua:** On winter pelagic trips out of Wanchese *Dare* NC, two were seen 19 Feb and 21 Feb, and one was seen 27 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

**Common Murre:** Excellent counts were made on winter pelagic trips out of Wanchese *Dare* NC in February, with five seen on 7 Feb, 12 seen on 21 Feb, and 25, a new record high count for NC, seen on 27 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). From shore in *Dare* NC, two from the southern end of Bodie Island 13 Feb (Michael Gosselin) and one from Jennette's Pier 13 Feb (Jeff Lewis) were great finds.



*Common Murre, off Oregon Inlet, Dare County NC, 27 Feb 2022.  
Photograph by Kate Sutherland.*

**Thick-billed Murre:** On winter pelagic trips out of Wanchese *Dare* NC, two were seen 19 Feb, one was seen NC 21 Feb, and five, a new record high count for NC, were seen 27 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). From shore, individuals were photographed at Bogue Inlet *Carteret* NC 17 Feb (Ed Phillips), from Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 18 Feb (Richard Hall, Paul Beerman, m. obs.), and from Cape Point *Dare* NC 20 Feb (Trevor Sleight, m. obs.).

**Razorbill:** Noticeably absent in December and January, Razorbills began showing up in numbers along our northern coast in February. 2838 on a winter pelagic trip out of Wanchese *Dare* NC 27 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was this winter's high count.

**Atlantic Puffin:** Puffins were seen on all five winter pelagic trips out of Wanchese *Dare* NC this February, including counts of 166 on 7 Feb, 118 on 19 Feb, and 302, a new record high count for NC, on 21 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). 83 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 16 Feb (Daniel Irons) was a remarkable count from shore. A moribund bird was found in Atlantic Beach *Carteret* NC 23 Feb (John Fussell).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** Seven on a winter pelagic trip out of Wanchese *Dare* NC 7 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was a good count. From shore, individuals were seen in Hatteras *Dare* NC 16-17 Jan (Sutherland) and from Cape Point *Dare* NC 2 Feb and 6 Feb (Daniel Irons, et al.).

**Black-headed Gull:** Sightings included an adult at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 26 Dec through 6 Mar (Gilbert Grant, m. obs.), a first-winter bird at Cape Point *Dare* NC 9 Feb, 13 Feb, and 24 Feb (Daniel Irons), and a first-winter bird photographed at Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 11 Feb (Jason Denesevich).

**Little Gull:** All reports this winter were made in *Dare* NC during the latter half of the period. Multiple sightings were made from Cape Point in February including a notable count of nine adults in eastbound flight 22 Feb (Daniel Irons). Little Gulls were seen on four of the five winter pelagic trips out of Wanchese in February, with a high count of four on 19 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).



*Apparent Heermann's Gull, Mason Inlet, Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover County NC, 12 Feb 2022. Photograph by Sam Cooper.*

**Heermann's Gull:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent adult Heermann's Gull at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 12 Feb (Peggy Eubank, Matt Janson, et al.). If accepted, the report would provide NC with its first record of this Pacific-coast gull. Reports of an adult in Litchfield Beach *Georgetown* SC 30 Dec (Peter Stangel) and at Cape Point *Dare* NC 15 Feb (Daniel Irons, Mike Resch) were likely that same individual.

**California Gull:** An adult bird, likely the same individual first reported 29 Nov (Brian Patteson), was seen at Cape Point *Dare* NC during the Cape Hatteras CBC 27 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, Kyle Kittelberger), on the beach just north of Cape Point 1 Jan (Michael Gosselin) and again at Cape Point 6-7 Feb (Daniel Irons, m. obs.).

**Iceland Gull:** Multiple sightings were made in *Dare* NC this winter including a count of three at Cape Point 5 Jan (Will Burgoyne, et al.). An individual on Masonboro Island *New Hanover* NC 1 Dec (Matthew Withrow) was one of only three sightings made south of Cape Point this winter.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** The Cape Hatteras CBC reported the highest total on any Audubon CBC again this year, with 1463 in southern *Dare* NC 27 Dec (*fide* Karen Lebing). A few of the higher counts at inland sites included a total of 75 at two sites just north of Greenville *Pitt* NC 21 Dec (Howard Vainright), 24 at a pond along US-64 southeast of Tarboro *Edgecombe* NC 13 Jan (Derb Carter), ten at a landfill in southeastern *Person* NC 22 Jan (David Pennebaker), four on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 5 Feb (Jeff Lemons, et al.), 127 at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 20 Feb (Ricky Davis), and 31 on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 27 Feb (Eddie Owens). Individuals at the southern end of Coddle Creek Reservoir *Cabarrus* NC 24-25 Dec (Taylor Piephoff, m. obs.) and at Salem Lake *Forsyth* NC 27 Feb (Ron Morris, m. obs.) were first for those counties.

**Slaty-backed Gull:** Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent adult Slaty-backed Gull at the Horry County Landfill *Horry* SC 3-8 Jan (Chris Hill, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide SC with its first record of this gull native to northeast Asia, and the first photographic documentation of this species anywhere in the Carolinas.

**Glaucous Gull:** Individuals were seen at a few sites on Hatteras Island *Dare* NC, from Waves south to Cape Point, intermittently through the winter (m. obs.).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** 26 at a pond along US-64 southeast of Tarboro *Edgecombe* NC 13 Jan (Derb Carter) was a notable count for a site away from the coast.

**Gull-billed Tern:** One photographed at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 10 Dec and 20 Dec (Steve Calver) was quite late, possibly the latest ever photographed in the Carolinas.



**Caspian Tern:** One at Cape Point *Dare* NC 8 Jan into spring (Will Burgoyne, m. obs.) was unusual for our northern coast in late winter.

**Red-throated Loon:** Inland sightings involved juvenile individuals on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 10-19 Dec (Patty Masten, et al.), on Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 9 Jan (Joe & Liz Dunkleman), on Lake Keowee *Oconee* SC 19 Jan (Jeff Tell), and on Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 22 Jan (Susan Campbell, Steve Shultz). It's possible that some or all of these sightings involved the same wandering juvenile.

**Pacific Loon:** One was seen along the coast of *New Hanover* NC, from Figure Eight Island south to Carolina Beach intermittently throughout the winter (m. obs.).

**Yellow-nosed Albatross:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of a Yellow-nosed Albatross seen in flight over the ocean from Cape Point *Dare* NC 13 Feb (Daniel Irons). There are only four previously accepted reports of this species in the Carolinas, all from *Dare* NC.

**Northern Fulmar:** Five on a winter pelagic trip out of Wanchese *Dare* NC 27 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was the only report this winter.

**Manx Shearwater:** This winter's high count was 30 on a winter pelagic trip out of Wanchese *Dare* NC 12 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

**Wood Stork:** One in flight over Latta Nature Preserve *Mecklenburg* NC 5 Jan (Kevin Metcalf) was very unusual for the Piedmont region in winter.

**Brown Booby:** An adult photographed in flight 53 miles south-southeast of the southern tip of Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC 30 Dec (Tim Mallon, Lilian Saul) was a great find for winter.

**Great Cormorant:** The individual found at Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 28 Nov (Ann Van Sant, Roberta Newton, Henry Link, m. obs.) continued at that site throughout the winter and into spring (m. obs.).

**American White Pelican:** 30 photographed in flight over River Park North *Pitt* NC 19 Feb (Caleb Bronsink) were a first for that county.

**American Bittern:** One photographed at Enka Lake *Buncombe* NC 23 Jan (Blake Cloninger) was unusual for the mountain region in mid-winter.

**Least Bittern:** One heard and then photographed at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 29-30 Jan (Michelle Payne, Amy & Steve Myers) was unusual for a site so far north in mid-winter.

**Great Blue Heron (Great White):** One was seen along the Watauga River around Valle Crucis *Watauga* NC 17 Dec (Richard Gray, Judi Sawyer) intermittently into spring (m. obs.). Interestingly, one was seen in this same area for a few months in mid-2020.

**Reddish Egret:** Two photographed together on the east end of Sunset Beach *Brunswick* NC 17 Dec and 27 Dec (David Wilson) were unusual for the NC coast in winter.



*Reddish Egrets, Sunset Beach, Brunswick County NC, 27 Dec 2021.  
Photograph by David Wilson.*

**Green Heron:** Individuals in southwestern *Durham* NC for a second year in a row 8 Dec (Nan Dewire) through 10 Feb (Maria de Bruyn) and at Heritage Lake *York* SC 14-30 Jan (Gretchen Locy, m. obs.) were unusual for the Piedmont in winter. Individuals photographed at Owen Park *Buncombe* NC 7 Dec (Casey Girard) through 8 Jan (John Britt) and at the Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 24 Feb (Jim Tolbert) were especially unusual for the mountain region in winter.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** 250 on South Island at Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center *Georgetown* SC 16 Dec (Aaron Given) was a notable concentration of that species.

**White Ibis:** One seen in flight with Canada Geese near Weaverville *Buncombe* NC 7 Feb (Kristin Hillegas) was extremely unusual for the mountain region in mid-winter.

**Roseate Spoonbill:** Two photographed near the Weyerhaeuser plant in northeastern *Martin* NC 1 Dec (Mary & Ralph Erickson) were very unusual for NC in winter, especially for a site north of *Brunswick* NC, and a first for that county.

**Golden Eagle:** Individuals were reported at four sites in the mountain region from *Watauga* NC south to *Madison* NC, and at four sites in the coastal plain from Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC south to Donnelley WMA *Colleton* SC.

**Northern Goshawk:** An immature bird briefly seen at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 6 Jan (Matt Janson) was likely the same individual seen at that site 11 Nov (Jeff Lewis).

**Red-tailed Hawk (Krider’s):** Individual Krider’s Hawks were photographed at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 30 Dec (Steve Calver), at Bear Island WMA *Colleton* SC 12 Feb (Andrew Lydeard, Peter Stangel), and in *Allendale* SC 19 Feb (Lydeard).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Individuals were seen and photographed at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 11 Dec and 24 Dec (Douglas Racine) and at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 29 Dec through 6 Mar (Bob Lewis, m. obs.).



*Snowy Owl, near Cape Point, Dare County NC,  
23 Jan 2022. Photograph by Brian Patteson.*

**Snowy Owl:** An immature Snowy Owl was seen and photographed at multiple sites along our coast this winter. It was seen around Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 21-25 Dec (Paul Doshkov, m. obs.), in Kitty Hawk *Dare* NC 19 Jan (Connie Marcy), again around Oregon Inlet 20 Jan (Mary Hoffman, m. obs.), between Cape Point and Hatteras *Dare* NC 23-26 Jan (Megan Baker, Michael

Gosselin, m. obs.), again around Oregon Inlet 31 Jan through 3 Feb (Doshkov, m. obs.), in Pine Knoll Shores *Carteret* NC 3 Feb (*fide* John Fussell), again around Oregon Inlet 6-12 Feb (m. obs.), near Hobcaw Barony *Georgetown* SC 17-18 Feb (Jack Volker), in southern Topsail Beach *Pender* NC 23-24 Feb (Caroline Little, m. obs.), and at Ft Macon *Carteret* NC 6-7 Mar (Jen Merlo). Because of the overlap in reports between sites on 3

Feb, at Oregon Inlet and in Pine Knoll Shores, it is likely there were at least two Snowy Owls in the Carolinas this winter.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher:** Individuals were seen at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 6 Jan (Alan MacEachren), along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 22 Jan (Mary Alice Hayward, m. obs.), and again at Alligator River NWR 6 Feb (m. obs.) through 7 Mar (Greg Hudson).

**Western Kingbird:** Individuals were seen at multiple sites in the SC coastal plain this winter—at Widgeon Point Preserve *Beaufort* 16-26 Dec (m. obs.), in West Ashley *Charleston* 25-26 Dec (Keith Miller), at ACE Basin NWR *Charleston* 26 Dec (Pam Ford, Craig Watson), along Bucksville Drive in *Horry* 26 Dec through 7 Jan (Allen Hill, m. obs.), at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* 31 Dec through 2 Jan (Steve Calver, m. obs.), in Edisto Beach *Charleston* 5 Jan (Alison Huff), at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* 5-20 Jan (John Cox, m. obs.), and on Bulls Island at Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 8 Jan and 5 Feb (Andrew Lydeard, Peter Stangel, m. obs.).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** One photographed in Swansboro *Onslow* NC 1 Jan (David Lovett, Barbara Russell Hoffman) was unusual for the winter period.

**Least Flycatcher:** One seen, photographed, and audio recorded along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 13-24 Jan (Jeff Lewis) was a great find for winter.

***Empidonax* sp.:** The *Empidonax* flycatcher, most likely a Least Flycatcher, found at Lake Busbee in Conway *Horry* SC 17 Nov (Steve & Barb Thomas, Paul Serridge, m. obs.) continued at that site throughout the winter and into spring (m. obs.).

**Say's Phoebe:** The individual found along Howerton Rd in *Guilford* NC 16 Oct (Jon Randolph, m. obs.) continued intermittently throughout the winter and into spring (m. obs.).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** 51 tallied southeast of Columbia *Richland* SC during the Congaree Swamp CBC 19 Dec (*fide* John Grego) was a record number for that count and the third highest total on any Audubon CBC this year.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** One at Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 9 Dec (Nathaniel Axtell) was quite late, while one at Lake Ed Johnson *Spartanburg* SC 26 Feb (Teresa Kopec) was somewhat early.

**Barn Swallow:** Three at the eastern end of Sunset Beach *Brunswick* NC 13 Jan (Taylor Piephoff) was a remarkable count for mid-winter.

**Sedge Wren:** 51 in *Georgetown* SC during the Winyah Bay CBC 16 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover) was a notable count.

**Brown Thrasher:** Interestingly, a female originally banded as an adult at Hilton Pond *York* SC 10 Feb 2014, was recaptured 26 Jan 2022, making that bird at least nine years old now if not older (Bill Hilton). The longest lifespan for a Brown Thrasher on record at the Bird Banding Laboratory is 10 years and eleven months.

**Mountain Bluebird:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent male Mountain Bluebird in Wrightsville Beach *New Hanover* NC 11 Feb into spring (Ken Hackney, m. obs.). The bird was quite accommodating, remaining in the same small area for over a month, allowing multitudes of birders great looks and photographs. If accepted, the report would provide NC with its second record and its first with photographic documentation.

**Veery:** One photographed just north of Murphy *Cherokee* NC 7 Dec (Clayton Gibb) was extremely late for a site in the mountain region.

**Varied Thrush:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Varied Thrush visiting a yard in Hickory *Catawba* NC 12-18 Dec (Gerry Feddy, Dwayne Martin, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the sixth record of this species in NC.



*Apparent White Wagtail, Eagle Island (restricted access), Brunswick County NC, 1 Jan 2022.  
Photograph by Jesse Anderson.*

**White Wagtail:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent White Wagtail on Eagle Island (restricted access) *Brunswick* NC during the Wilmington CBC 1 Jan (Steve Pollock, Ron Clark, Taylor Piephoff, m. obs.). Unfortunately access to the site was limited to the day of the CBC, so it is unknown if, or for how long, the bird continued there. If accepted, the report would provide NC with its third record of this vagrant from Eurasia.

**Red Crossbill:** A pair observed copulating and building a nest at Carver's Gap *Mitchell* NC 12 Feb (Jimena Golcher-Benavides, Cody Porter) was unusual for the winter season.

**Lapland Longspur:** Sightings involved one along Silver Bluff Rd in *Aiken* SC 5-9 Jan (Andrew Lydeard, m. obs.) and two along Hooper Lane *Henderson* NC 22 Jan (Todd Arcos). At both sites the longspurs were found with flocks of American Pipits in corn-stubble fields.

**Snow Bunting:** One photographed in a yard in western *Lee* SC 12-13 Jan (Gus Messinides) was very unusual for a site away from the coast. Three at Cape Point *Dare* NC 3 Dec (Michael Gosselin) was this winter's high count.

**Lark Sparrow:** Individuals were seen in Hemingway *Williamsburg* SC for a second year in a row, 7 Dec through 7 Feb (Jay Chandler, m. obs.), and in *Camden* NC for a fifth year in a row, 9 Nov through 28 Jan (James Harrison).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Individuals were seen and photographed at Blue Clay Bike Park *New Hanover* NC 15-25 Jan (Sam Cooper, m. obs.) and in northeastern *Washington* NC 3 Feb (Matt Janson).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Individuals at Coker Arboretum *Orange* NC 18-26 Dec (Lucretia Kinney, m. obs.) and along the South Ellerbe Creek Trail *Durham* NC 22 Dec (Robert Meehan) were rather late for sites in the Piedmont region. Individuals were found at about nine sites along or near the coast this winter.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Two were reported this winter, both found among large mixed blackbird flocks in agricultural areas—an adult male near Engelhard *Hyde* NC 1 Jan (Jennifer Maher, Noah Rokoske) and a female along Mid-Pines Rd in *Wake* NC 17-21 Feb (Sanjay Karanth, m. obs.).

**Orchard Oriole:** One seen in a yard in Morehead City *Carteret* NC 3-4 Dec (John Fussell) was very late to depart.

**Bullock's Oriole:** Individual adult males visited feeders near Huntersville *Mecklenburg* NC, for a second year in a row, throughout the period (Jeanie McCoy, m. obs.), and in northwestern *Duplin* NC 2 Feb intermittently into spring (Deanne Flock, m. obs.).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** The high count at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC this winter was 23 on 7 Dec (Steve Patterson). 27 in a livestock pasture on Goat Island *Clarendon* SC 26 Dec (Harold Donnelly), and 30 there 15 Jan (Carl Miller, et al.), were notable counts. Three at Mills River Park *Henderson* NC 2 Dec (Wayne Forsythe) was the only report from NC.

**Ovenbird:** Individuals lingered at multiple sites along or near the coast in December, though, oddly, none were found on CBCs this year. One spent the late winter in a yard in Manteo *Dare* NC 22 Jan into spring (Pat Draisey). 12 in Buxton Woods *Dare* NC 8 Feb (Daniel Irons) was an excellent count for late winter.

**Tennessee Warbler:** One photographed along the boardwalk trail at Congaree National Park *Richland* SC 12 Feb (James Moore) was a great find for winter.

**Nashville Warbler:** Individuals were seen in *Pasquotank* NC 15 Jan (Larry Chen, Sarah Toner) and visiting a birdbath in Mount Pleasant *Charleston* SC, where photographed, 15-18 Feb (Connie Fowler).

**Common Yellowthroat:** One at Valle Crucis Community Park *Watauga* NC 5-21 Dec (Maxwell Ramey) was rather late for the mountain region.

**American Redstart:** One photographed in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 22 Dec (Jeff Click, Brad Dalton, Roger Smith) was a good find for winter, especially for a site away from the coast.

**Cape May Warbler:** One was photographed visiting a suet feeder in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 17 Jan through 6 Feb (Deb Winter).

**Northern Parula:** Farthest inland this winter was an adult male in Charlotte *Mecklenburg* NC during its CBC 26 Dec (Greg Hays, Taylor Piephoff).

**Yellow Warbler:** One photographed at a suet feeder in Black Mountain *Buncombe* NC 18 Jan (James Poling) was very unusual for the mountain region in mid-winter.

**Blackpoll Warbler:** One photographed at Pullen Park *Wake* NC during the Raleigh CBC 18 Dec (John Gerwin) was extremely late.

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Farthest inland this winter were individuals visiting feeders in southern *Wilkes* NC, for a third winter in a row, from mid-fall through at least 17 Jan (Sue Crowell) and just east of Tryon *Polk* NC 26 Nov through 16 Jan (Barbara Hughes).

**Prairie Warbler:** One was seen at Apex Community Park *Wake* NC for the second winter in a row, this year through 18 Jan (m. obs.). As usual, multiple sightings were made along or near the SC coast this winter including a total of five at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC during the Savannah CBC 2 Jan (Steve Calver, m. obs.).

**Wilson's Warbler:** One at Kitty Hawk Woods *Dare* NC 14 Feb (Andrew Thornton) was a great find for winter.

**Summer Tanager:** Two, a male and a female, visited feeders in West Columbia *Lexington* SC, for a second winter in a row, intermittently throughout the winter (Allison Smith, m. obs.). Individuals, most visiting feeders, were photographed in Burlington *Alamance* NC 9 Dec (Joe Donahue), in northeastern *Brunswick* NC, for an eighth winter in a row, 20 Dec into spring (Greg Massey), at the upper end of Oak Hollow Lake *Guilford* NC 28 Dec (Kara Barco), at Catawba College *Rowan* NC 17 Jan (Jennifer & Michael Board), in West Ashley *Charleston* SC 20-25 Jan (Keith McCullough), and near James City *Craven* NC 21 Jan (Christine Stoughton-Root).

**Western Tanager:** This species was reported at 18 sites this winter, mostly at feeders in the coastal plain. Two visiting a feeder in Charleston *Charleston* SC 20 Feb into spring (Truman Smith, m. obs.) was the high count. Individuals visited feeders in Kitty Hawk *Dare* NC 18 Dec (Jonathan Cooley), in northern Charlotte *Mecklenburg* NC 25-26 Dec



(Jeff Lemons, m. obs.), on Seabrook Island *Charleston* SC 27 Dec into spring (Joleen Ardaiole, m. obs.), in Apex *Wake* NC, for a second year in a row, from December through 29 Mar (Steve Shultz, m. obs.), in North Augusta *Aiken* SC 11 Jan (Melissa Bemiller), in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC, for a second year in a row, 13 Jan into spring (Deb Winter, m. obs.), in Aiken *Aiken* SC 18-31 Jan (Theresa Randall, m. obs.), near Greenville *Pitt* NC 19 Jan through 5 Feb (Chandra & Elizabeth Biggerstaff), near Irmo *Lexington* SC 20-28 Jan (Caroline Eastman, m. obs.), in Florence *Florence* SC 21 Jan through 18 Feb (Roger Hux, m. obs.), on Bell Island *Currituck* NC from late January through 20 Feb (Mary Simmons), in Greensboro *Guilford* NC 13 Feb (Cara Michele), in Isle of Palms *Charleston* SC, for a second year in a row, 18 Feb (Laura Judson), in Cayce *Lexington* SC 20 Feb into spring (Katie Idzik), and in Rocky Mount *Nash* NC 23 Feb into spring (Ricky Davis, m. obs.). A male individual photographed along the Port Royal Boardwalk *Beaufort* SC 19 Jan (Steven Guy) was unusual for a site away from feeders.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Individual males photographed at a feeder near Max Patch *Madison* NC, at 4200 feet above sea level, 1-4 Feb (Kathryn Gunther, m. obs.) and in a yard near New Ellenton *Aiken* SC 2-3 Feb (Julie Mobley) were very unusual for winter, the former especially so for that high elevation.

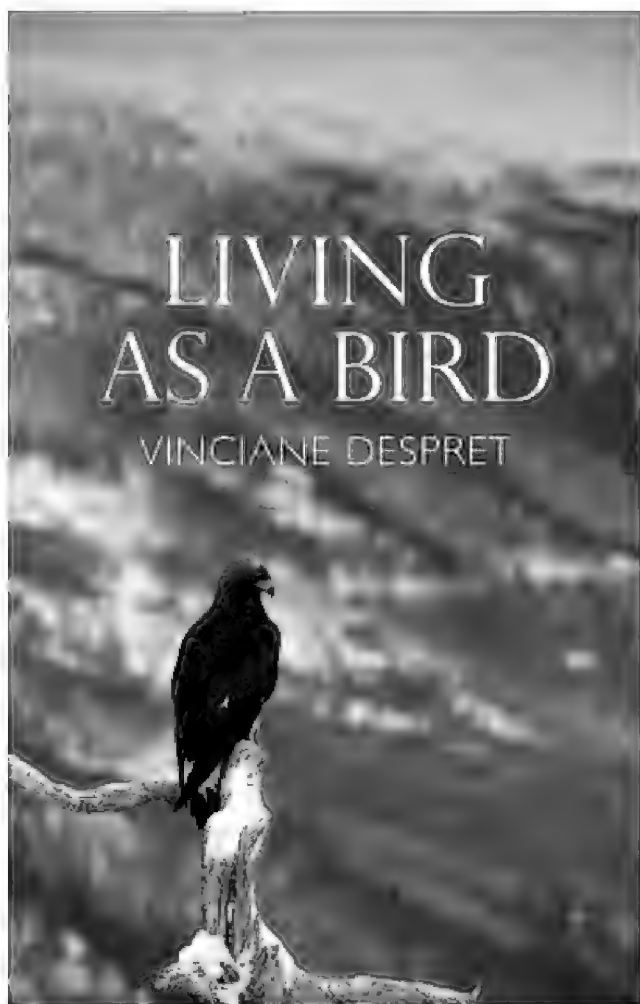
**Blue Grosbeak:** One photographed in Cayce *Lexington* SC 19 Dec (Katie Idzik) was quite late. One photographed at Meggett County Park *Charleston* SC 19 Feb (Jordan Juzdowski) was extremely unusual for late winter. Had this individual wintered in the area, or was it a very early returning spring migrant?

**Indigo Bunting:** Individuals lingered into early winter at three sites—at Pickney Island NWR *Beaufort* SC 5-9 Dec (William Brown, m. obs.), along the Neuse River Trail *Wake* NC 7 Dec (Patty McQuillan), and along the Cross City Trail in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 15 Dec (Jim Holcomb).

**Painted Bunting:** Farthest inland this winter was an adult male visiting a feeder in Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC for a second winter in a row, 25-31 Jan (Paul Beerman, m. obs.).

**Dickcissel:** Individuals were photographed visiting feeders in Durham *Durham* NC 30 Nov through 18 Dec (Erin & Philip Zoutendam), in Rockyhock *Chowan* NC 24 Dec (Jerry Messinger), in Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 10 Jan (Steve Hooks), and near Southern Pines *Moore* NC 15 Jan through 14 Feb (John Bird).

## Birder's Book Review *Steve Shultz*



The book opens, “It all began with a blackbird. My bedroom window had remained open for the first time in months, a symbol of victory over winter. The blackbird’s song woke me at dawn. He was singing with all his heart, with all his strength, with all his blackbird talent... This blackbird was singing, as the philosopher Étienne Souriau would say, with all the *enthusiasm* of his body...”

What was this blackbird thinking at the time? Short answer: We don’t know. But much of what we know, or believe we know, about birds results from making observations, and then, necessarily, filtering those observations through the lens of the human mind. Does a bird exhibit aggression toward an intruder because it is defending territory or do we imagine that this is the case because a human would react in this way? We are inherently handicapped in our understanding by our very nature.

Despret looks to examine bird behavior by expertly blending current science with a philosophical view of avian life, challenging long-held beliefs on behavior, especially as it relates to territorial considerations. Often birds are thought of as the epitome of freedom, with the ability, on gliding wing, to travel wherever the winds blow, or, alternatively, to simply respond to stimuli in rote patterns. Despret demonstrates that birds occupy highly complex social structures that lead to rich and nuanced behaviors. For example, is the defense of a territory aggression, or rather might it be better defined as expression, and how can we interpret that expression? Is the goal many male birds’ colorful plumage to attract females, or instead is it to signal other males?

A popular theory on the carrying capacity of a particular parcel of land is that the quantity of young that can successfully be raised is capped by food availability. Despret questions the veracity of this line of thought: “The fact that territories are the site of far more complex social activities than these models could allow us to envisage, activities where the art of distance could also, as we shall see, be the art of finding an arrangement with others, of being attuned to them. And undoubtedly this negligence also indicates stubborn habits of thinking which shape the way in which any territory is perceived.”

Intrigued? *Living as a Bird*, with English translation by Helen Morrison, can be purchased from your favorite bookseller in electronic or hardcopy format. Published by Polity Press (Cambridge UK), the ISBN-13 is 978-1509547272.

# CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

[www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes to the extent allowable. Pay dues or make donations at <https://carolinabirdclub.org/dues>. Make change of address at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile>. Send correspondence regarding membership matters to the Headquarters Secretary. Answers to questions about the club might be found at <https://carolinabirdclub.org/about.html>.

## ANNUAL DUES

Individual or non-profit.....	\$30.00
Family.....	\$35.00
Student.....	\$15.00
Sustaining and businesses.....	\$30.00
Patron.....	\$50.00 and up
Life Membership (payable in four consecutive \$100 installments) .....	\$500.00
Associate Life Membership (in same household as life member).....	\$100.00

## ELECTED OFFICERS

President	Steve Tracy, Gastonia NC	StevePath1@aol.com
NC Vice-Presidents	Colleen Bockhahn, Clayton NC	
	Guy McGrane, Deep Gap NC	
SC Vice-President	Cathy Miller, Charleston SC	
Secretary	Karaleah Reichart, Raleigh NC	
Treasurer	Jared Miles, Charlotte NC	
NC Members-at-Large	Michael Clark, Durham NC	
	Betsy Kane, Washington NC	
	Julie Lee, Nebo NC	
	Barbara Reynolds, Asheville NC	
SC Members-at-Large	Richard Hayes, Charleston SC	
	Mac Williams, Hartsville SC	

## EX-OFFICIO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chat Editor	Steve Shultz, Apex, NC	chat@carolinabirdclub.org
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Immediate Past President	Lewis Burke, Columbia SC	

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# The Chat

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# THE CHAT

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## 2021 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

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**Keith McCullough**<sup>1</sup>, Chair; Lex Glover, Secretary; Giff Beaton, Jeff Click, Aaron Given, Simon Harvey, Chris Hill, Linda Montgomery, Steve Patterson, Irvin Pitts

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In 2021, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee (SCBRC) acted on 30 reports, of which 15 were accepted, 13 were not accepted, and two will be rereviewed. One report was discovered as being previously resolved, voiding the duplicate result in 2021. Among the reports that were acted upon, nine were historical reports that were determined to be pending according to the committee's master list. All nine were resolved in 2021.

Heermann's Gull, Bar-tailed Godwit, and Broad-tailed Hummingbird were added to South Carolina's Main List this year, bringing the total to 448 species. Each of the three additions is categorized as Definitive based on the presence of photographic evidence. For Heermann's Gull, two separate reports were received with observations separated by 6 months and over 100 miles. Both reports of this species were accepted and are presumed to be the same individual that was first photographed as a juvenile in Florida (Volusia County) in 2019 and since documented in various states as far north as Massachusetts. In 2021 another Heermann's Gull, a juvenile in Virginia, was documented with photographs to provide evidence of at least 2 individuals along the East Coast.

Following the acceptance of significant changes to SCBRC's bylaws in 2020 by the committee and Carolina Bird Club's Executive Committee, a reorganization of SC's Provisional II and Hypothetical lists into one Supplemental List occurred in 2021. Species categorized as hypothetical, not established, or questionable origin are now designated as such within the new Supplemental List.

In 2021 Steve Wagner rolled off the committee, Lex Glover became a non-voting member serving as secretary and committee advisor, and Steve Patterson and Linda Montgomery were welcomed as new members.

The annual meeting of the SCBRC was held on 13 December 2021 via Zoom. The meeting was attended by Giff Beaton, Jeff Click, Aaron Given, Lex Glover, Simon Harvey, Chris Hill, Linda Montgomery, Keith McCullough, Steve Patterson, and Irvin Pitts. Keith McCullough was reelected as Chair. The Committee did not add or remove any species from the Review List after discussions but did consider adding more Inland or Coastal review species based on their status in those regions. A significant portion of the meeting was devoted to a final oral voting session for reports that remained pending after three prior circulations. Four such reports were discussed and voted upon. Those results are included below.

## ACCEPTED REPORTS

**Anna's x Calliope Hummingbird** (*Calypte anna x Selasphorus calliope*). 2018-024. Accept (8-1). The evidence for this observation spanned multiple states and multiple years being first observed, captured, and banded near Newark, DE in November 2012. At that time it was in juvenile plumage and identified as an Anna's Hummingbird despite some conflicting measurements. Continued observations of this bird into 2013 produced photo evidence of new plumage that conflicted with a pure Anna's Hummingbird. It was later recaptured in Spartanburg, SC on 09 December 2015 and in 2018 submitted by Rusty Trump to the Committee as Anna's x Calliope. After three rounds of voting the Committee ultimately agreed that the detailed feather measurements and analysis in 2015 aligned with the hybrid identification. One member acknowledged some solid evidence for the hybrid but was not 100% convinced and voted not to accept.

**Snowy Plover** (*Charadrius nivosus*). 01-97-01. Accept (9-0). The Committee re-reviewed a pending report from Litchfield Beach on 27 January 1997 originally submitted by Pete Worthington. This vote produced unanimous agreement of an adequate description and comparison with similar species.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*). 2021-017. Accept (9-0). Josh Lefever submitted a written report of a Bar-tailed Godwit first seen 25 October 2021 on the northeast Kiawah Island beach near the Ocean Course. Written details plus four photos from the same date by Keith McCullough were enough for unanimous acceptance. This is the first state record for Bar-tailed Godwit.



*Bar-tailed Godwit, 25 Oct 21, Charleston County, SC.  
Photograph by Keith McCullough.*



**Hudsonian Godwit** (*Limosa haemastica*). 2021-012. Accept (8-1). Paul Serridge submitted a written report of a Hudsonian Godwit seen 20 November 2021 at Litchfield Beach in Georgetown County. These written details plus photos in eBird reports from this location on multiple dates were enough for all but one member to accept. The dissenting member did not think that Black-tailed Godwit had been sufficiently considered or was ruled out by photos.

**Ruff** (*Calidris pugnax*). 04-00-02. Accept (9-0). Originally reported by Kenneth Allen with observation dates from 08 April 2000 to 10 April 2000 at Santee Coastal Reserve in Charleston County, this report underwent a fourth and final vote at the Committee's annual meeting. Previous non-accept votes were received in prior circulations with common reasoning that the description was limited and similar species were not thoroughly considered in the description. After oral discussion, the Committee unanimously voted to accept based on the description given and the numerous experienced birders that observed it.

**Dovekie** (*Alle alle*). 2021-001. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report along with four photos of a Dovekie at the Huntington Beach State Park jetty seen on 06 March 2021. Many observers were able to observe and photograph this bird over about a week's time period.

**Heermann's Gull** (*Larus heermanni*). 2021-008. Accept (9-0). Tammy Hester submitted a written report along with six photos of a Heermann's Gull seen at Hunting Island State Park (Beaufort County) on 21 June 2021. Leading up to this report, a well-documented Heermann's Gull was present just over the Georgia state line on Tybee Island. This was the first SC state record for Heermann's Gull.

**Heermann's Gull** (*Larus heermanni*). 2021-018. Accept (8-1). Peter Stangel submitted a written report of a Heermann's Gull seen 30 December 2021 at Litchfield Beach (Georgetown County). Overall, the Committee felt that the written description was thorough enough to accept as the second state record. As mentioned above, based on documentation from records up and down the East Coast, it is presumed that this is the same individual as the 2021-008 Heermann's Gull.

**Iceland Gull** (*Larus glaucoides*). 2021-002. Accept (9-0). Chris Hill submitted a written report of an Iceland Gull seen at the Horry County Landfill on 19 March 2021. The Committee unanimously accepted this based on appropriate written field notes and adequate size comparisons of nearby Herring Gulls.

**Glaucous Gull** (*Larus hyperboreus*). 2021-007. Accept (9-0). Aidan Rominger submitted a written report and one photo of a Glaucous Gull seen on Kiawah Island (Charleston County) on 31 May 2021. Committee members thought that the photo and description did well enough to eliminate the possibility of a pigment-challenged Herring Gull.

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird** (*Selasphorus platycercus*). 2021-013. Accept (9-0). Bill Hilton submitted a written report along with a separate detailed write-up of a Broad-tailed Hummingbird observed and captured on 20 September 2021 at the Hilton Pond Center

(York County). The numerous close-up photographs and the detailed analysis of the bird while in-hand provided ample documentation for a unanimous vote. This is the first SC state record for Broad-tailed Hummingbird.

**White-faced Ibis** (*Plegadis chihi*). 2021-005. Accept (9-0). John Kotz submitted a written report and four photos of a White-faced Ibis seen on 22 April 2021 on Kiawah Island (Charleston County). Aaron Given contributed three photos from 25 April 2021. The excellent photos provided sufficient documentation for unanimous acceptance.



*White-faced Ibis, 25 Apr 21, Charleston County, SC.  
Photograph by Aaron Given.*

**White-faced Ibis** (*Plegadis chihi*). 01-03-12. Accept (8-1). One written report from Bob Maxwell and one written report from Barbara Maxwell of a White-faced Ibis seen on 02 November 2000 at the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (Jasper County) went unresolved after three previous rounds of voting. After a fourth and final vote at the Committee's annual meeting, the Committee voted 8-1 in favor of acceptance in large part due to the various experienced observers that observed the bird. Previous non-accept votes cited concern over the three plus year time interval between the observation and the report to the committee, and the limited details given.

**Fork-tailed Flycatcher** (*Tyrannus savana*). 2021-006. Accept (9-0). George McHenry Jr. and Lois Stacey each submitted written reports of a Fork-tailed Flycatcher seen at Dobbin's Farm (Anderson County) between 28 March 2021 and 29 March 2021. George McHenry Jr. also contributed a photo. Around 100 observers observed this bird over the two-day span, contributing many photos to what represents the fifth SC state record for Fork-tailed Flycatcher.



*Fork-tailed Flycatcher, 28 May 21, Anderson County, SC.  
Photograph by George McHenry, Jr.*

**Cave Swallow** (*Petrochelidon fulva*). 2019-018. Accept (8-1). The Committee voted three times without conclusion on a written report and photo of a swallow seen 29 November 2019 at Heritage Shores Nature Preserve (Horry County). During a fourth round of oral voting at the Committee's annual meeting it was accepted as Cave Swallow with one dissenting vote. Non-accept votes in all voting session centered around potential lighting issues in the photograph that could cause a misrepresentation of color.

**NON-ACCEPTED REPORTS**

**Whooper Swan** (*Cygnus cygnusi*). 2021-003. Non-accept (0-9). The committee considered a written report with 7 photos of a Whooper Swan seen in Greenville County in March of 2021. As with the 2020 Whooper Swan individual in Clarendon County, the committee felt that the identification was correct but the origin in question. This species remains on SC's Supplemental List in the Questionable Origin category.

**Hudsonian Godwit** (*Limosa haemastica*). 2021-004. Non-accept (1-8). All but one member felt that the written report from Beaufort County did not contain sufficient details to rule out other godwits.

**Ruff** (*Calidris pugnax*). 10-00-06. Non-accept (3-6). This was the third round of voting on this written report with sketch of a Ruff from Jasper County. After this circulation the majority of committee members felt that the description was too limited and that similar species were not ruled out based on the description or sketch.

**Jaeger sp.** (*Stercorarius* sp.). 2021-015. Non-accept (1-8). Jaegers and Skuas are reviewable at any time if observed inland in SC. The extremely limited details and long distance from the observer were enough for all but one member to give a non-accept vote.

**Iceland Gull** (*Larus glaucoides*). 05-98-22. Non-accept (0-9). On this third round of voting for an Iceland Gull in Georgetown County the committee unanimously agreed that the provided written details did not adequately consider a bleached or pigment-challenged Herring Gull.

**Common Tern** (*Sterna hirundo*). 2021-014. Non-accept (1-8). The Committee reviewed this written report from Abbeville County under the “Inland Only” review status for Common Tern in SC. All but one member felt that the potential for error was too great considering the limited details and nearly one-mile estimated distance from the observer.

**Masked Booby** (*Sula dactylatra*). 11-98-20. Non-accept (1-8). On this third round of voting for a written Masked Booby report from Georgetown County, all but one member chose to err on the side of caution. Cited reasoning includes the distance to the observer, the possibility of an immature Northern Gannett, the limited information given about size, and the observation date.

**Monk Parakeet** (*Myiopsitta monachus*). 2019-021. Non-accept (1-8). On this second round of voting for a Monk Parakeet seen in Horry County in 2019, all but one member felt that the origin of this bird was questionable enough to warrant a non-accept vote. The first round of voting on this report took place before the 2020 update of SCBRC’s bylaws, at which time a vote for “Not Established” constituted a vote to Accept. Monk Parakeet sits on SC’s Supplemental List under the Questionable Origin category.

**Say’s Phoebe** (*Sayornis saya*). 2019-009. Non-accept (3-6). On this third round of voting for a written report and photo of Say’s Phoebe reported from Charleston County in 2019, a majority of members felt this was insufficiently documented. Cited concerns include poor lighting, inexperience, lack of details, and the lack of optics used.

**European Goldfinch** (*Carduelis carduelis*). 2021-010. Non-accept (0-9). Three photos of European Goldfinch taken in Charleston County were considered by the Committee. Because of the presence of this species in pet trade and the lack of nearby established populations, the Committee unanimously voted not to accept the observation. Eight members chose Questionable Origin and one member chose Not Established as their non-

accept votes. European Goldfinch sits on SC's Supplemental List under the Questionable Origin category.

**American Tree Sparrow** (*Spizelloides arborea*). 03-97-01. Non-accept (2-7). The Committee discovered in 2021 that this report remained unresolved after being reported as such in the 1997-1999 annual report. This second round of voting for an American Tree Sparrow reported from Anderson County in 1997 returned seven non-accept votes. Common reasoning to not accept this report centered around the lack of details of the face and bill in the written report.

**Blackpoll Warbler** (*Setophaga striata*). 12-98-24. Non-accept (7-3). The Committee remained divided on this written out-of-season report for Blackpoll Warbler, but more than one non-accept vote is enough for non-acceptance in a fourth and final voting session. In general, members thought that the written details supported the identification. Concerns from dissenting members included the unusual nature of the bird being in breeding plumage in Anderson County on December 22.

## Did You Know?

Full copies of *The Chat* dating back to the very first issue, March 1937, are available for viewing online. Find these and more at:

<https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/chat/>



### The Chat

BULLETIN OF THE NORTH CAROLINA BIRD CLUB  
PUBLISHED AT RALEIGH, N. C.

JOHN H. GREY, JR., EDITOR  
1718 PARK DRIVE

VOL. I

March, 1937

No. 1

# BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Spring 2022, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.*

<i>Winter</i>	<i>December 1–February 28</i>	<i>due March 20</i>
<i>Spring</i>	<i>March 1–May 31</i>	<i>due June 20</i>
<i>Summer</i>	<i>June 1–July 31</i>	<i>due August 20</i>
<i>Fall</i>	<i>August 1–November 30</i>	<i>due December 20</i>

*Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location) and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.*

*Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.*

*Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.*

*I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.*

*If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.*

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area

*All italicized place names are counties.*

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** Unusual for upstate SC were ten in flight over Lake Jocassee Oconee SC 1 May (Irvin Pitts, et al.) and three near Clemson Pickens SC 26 May (Kevin Kubach). 28 in Swansboro Onslow NC 18 May (Donna Polinsky) was a notable count for NC.

**Fulvous Whistling-Duck:** Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Fulvous Whistling-Duck at Kingfisher Pond at Savannah NWR *Jasper* SC 19 Apr (Trevor Zook, et al.) through 24 Apr (m. obs.). Though this species was once a regular vagrant to the Carolinas, sightings have become quite rare in the past two decades, with the last confirmed sighting made 28 Aug 2015.



*Apparent Fulvous Whistling-Duck, 20 Apr 2022, Savannah NWR, Jasper County, SC.  
Photograph by Pam Ford.*

**Brant:** One seen in flight from the western end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 14 Mar (Aaron Given) was unusual for the southern portion of our coast.

**Tundra Swan:** An individual lingered around Cape Point *Dare* NC until 29 Apr (Daniel Irons, m. obs.) and later around Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 4 May into June (Jan Hansen, m. obs.). Interestingly, multiple observers reported seeing the swan swimming on the ocean.

**Green-winged Teal (Eurasian):** One continued at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC from winter through 5 Apr (Jeff Lewis).

**Common Goldeneye:** A hen on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 29-30 Mar (Galen Goodrum, m. obs.) was rather late for a site in the mountain region.

**Common Merganser:** Breeding was confirmed again this year at several sites in the NC mountains—on Lake Adger *Polk* where a hen and 11 juveniles were photographed 20 Apr (Keith Viglietta), on Big Laurel Creek in *Madison* where two hens and eight juveniles were seen 30 Apr (Clayton Gibb), on the Tuckasegee River in *Jackson* where a



hen and ten juveniles were photographed 9 May (Christopher Moorman), and on the French Broad River in Marshall *Madison* where a hen and three juveniles were seen 13 May (David Schroder). Suggestive of attempted breeding were drake/hen pairs on Curtis Creek in *McDowell* NC 13 Apr (Hue Dao, et al.), on the Valley River in Murphy *Cherokee* NC 17 Apr (Callan Swenson), and on the Watauga River near Valle Crucis *Watauga* NC 30 Apr through mid-May (Jake Hillygus, m. obs.).

**Horned Grebe:** One photographed on Lake Wateree *Fairfield* SC 29 May (Jill & Ted Falasco) was quite late.

**Red-necked Grebe:** One photographed on the ocean in Nags Head *Dare* NC 3 May (Jan Hansen) was rather late.

**Western Grebe:** Individuals were seen on the ocean in Avon *Dare* NC 6 Mar (Megan Baker, m. obs.), in Kitty Hawk *Dare* NC 14 Mar (Ivan Munkres, m. obs.), and in Duck *Dare* NC 16 Mar (Jeff Lewis). It is likely that these reports all involved the same individual slowing moving northward along the coast.

**White-winged Dove:** Individuals were reported at five sites along or near the coast this spring. One photographed on a powerline in *Camden* NC 27 Apr (Matt Janson) was a first for that county.

**Rufous Hummingbird:** The female that wintered in the Bean Tract of Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC for a second year in a row remained through 1 Apr (Dwayne Martin). An adult male that visited a feeder in *Lexington* SC beginning 8 Jan was, interestingly, also last seen 1 Apr (Irvin Pitts, m. obs.).

**Clapper Rail:** One photographed on a driveway in Kinston *Lenoir* NC 23 Apr (Bridgett Olive Williamson) was likely a migrant forced down by inclement weather.

**King Rail:** One heard calling at Lake Surf *Moore* NC 24 Apr (John Bird, Carol Bowman, Matt Spangler) was unusual for the Sandhills region.

**Sora:** One photographed on the campus of Western Carolina University *Jackson* NC 10 May (Timothy Carstens) was unusual for that area of the mountains.

**Common Gallinule:** One photographed along the Catawba River in western *Mecklenburg* NC 30 Apr (Eric Keith, et al.) was the inland-most report made this spring.

**Purple Gallinule:** One seen at Pee Dee NWR *Anson* NC 6 May (Mike Turner) was a great find for a site in NC so far from the coast. Also notable for NC were individuals photographed on top of a vending machine in Pine Knoll Shores *Carteret* 8 Apr (Jon Rouse, *fide* Susan Campbell), near Cape Point *Dare* 26 Apr (*fide* Audrey Whitlock), on Bald Head Island *Brunswick* 7 May (Anna McCallum) and 17 May (Jenna Albaugh, et al.), at a small pond in Waves *Dare* 23-26 May (Karen Lebing, m. obs.), and in *Camden* 28 May (Jillian Kern) and 31 May (Matt Janson).

**Limpkin:** Breeding was confirmed for a second year in a row in the Island Green community in southern *Horry* SC when two adults and five juveniles were photographed 8 May (Joe & Liz Dunkleman). One seen and photographed in the Hicks Creek arm of Lake Norman at Lake Norman SP *Iredell* NC 19-22 May (David Schroder, m. obs.) was notable for NC. Interestingly, a Limpkin, likely the same individual, was photographed at that same site 30 Jul 2021.

**Sandhill Crane:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of a pair of Sandhill Cranes tending to a nest with eggs at a site in *Brunswick* NC 10 May (Jamie Adams). There are no previous breeding records of this species anywhere in the Carolinas.

**Black-necked Stilt:** Four photographed at W. Kerr Scott Reservoir *Wilkes* NC 24 Apr (Guy McGrane, Max Ramey) were an excellent find inland, especially for the foothills region.

**American Oystercatcher:** One photographed on the dock at Pamlico Plantation Marina *Beaufort* NC, ~ 55 miles inland, 31 Mar (Steve Taylor) was unusual for a site so far from the coast, especially when not following the passage of a tropical storm.

**American Golden-Plover:** There was a noticeable migratory movement of this species through upstate SC and the southern NC mountain valleys in late March. Sightings were made at the Super Sod farm along Hooper Lane *Henderson* NC 25 Mar through 2 Apr (m. obs.), with high counts including 40 on 25 Mar (Vicky Burke), 52 on 26 Mar (Michael Plauché), and 60 on 28 Mar (Steve Dowlan). In neighboring *Transylvania* NC, five were found at a turf farm near Brevard 25 Mar (Nathaniel Axtell, et al.). 54 at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 26 Mar (Scott Davis, et al.) was another amazing count for spring, possibly a new record high count for SC.

**Semipalmated Plover:** One photographed on the campus of Western Carolina University *Jackson* NC 27 May (Timothy Carstens) was unusual for that area of the mountains and a first for that county.

**Upland Sandpiper:** Individuals were reported at four sites this spring, all very late March to mid-April. One photographed on a mudflat in the Spring Creek Impoundment at Goose Creek Game Land *Pamlico* NC 28 Mar (Ronnie Hewlette) was a first for that county.

**Long-billed Curlew:** Three photographed together at the Rachel Carson Reserve *Carteret* NC 1 Mar (Elsa Chen, et al.) was a notable count for NC. One photographed in an impoundment at Donnelley WMA *Colleton* SC 25 Mar (Vicki Rogerson) was extremely unusual for a site so far, ~ 20 miles, from the coast.

**Bar-tailed Godwit:** The individual that wintered in a tidal lagoon at a private golf course on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC, after first discovered 25 Oct 2021 (Josh Lefever, Nathaniel Watkins, et al.), was last seen 16 Apr (Keith McCullough, m. obs.).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Hudsonian Godwit in a tidal lagoon at a private golf course on the eastern end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC, the same site hosting the Bar-tailed Godwit, 20 Mar through 16 Apr (Robert Hill, m. obs.). This species is much, much rarer in spring migration than it is in fall.

**Marbled Godwit:** Six on Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 18 Apr (Nathaniel Axtell) were very unusual for the mountain region and the only inland report made this spring.

**Ruddy Turnstone:** One seen and photographed at a pond along Meadow View Rd in *Orange* NC 13 May (Vicki Nebes, m. obs.) was the only inland report made this spring.

**Ruff:** Two were reported this spring—individuals seen and photographed at a catfish farm along NC-33 in *Beaufort* NC 4 Apr (Trevor Sleight) and at Mullet Pond at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 28-30 May (James Fillmore, m. obs.). Notably, the individual seen in Georgetown SC was an adult male entering breeding plumage, a sight rarely seen in our region.



*Ruff, 30 May 2022, Huntington Beach State Park, Georgetown County, SC.  
Photograph by Jerry Kerschner.*

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** One photographed at the Kinston Nature Center *Lenoir* NC 13 May (Caleb Bronsink) was, surprisingly, a first for that county.

**Red-necked Phalarope:** Multiple sightings were made on/from shore along the Outer Banks in May. A total of 484, made up of multiple eastbound flocks, seen during a ten-hour ocean-watch from Cape Point *Dare* NC 6 May (Daniel Irons), was this spring's high count. 72 counted one mile off Beaufort Inlet *Carteret* NC 15 May (Caleb Bronsink) was a notable total for a site outside of *Dare* NC.

**Red Phalarope:** One photographed on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 5 Mar (Gretchen Locy, Patty Masten, et al.) was a fantastic find. There are only two previous records of this species at a site away from the coast in NC in spring.

**Great Skua:** One seen in eastbound flight from Cape Point *Dare* NC 5 Mar (Daniel Irons) was a notable find from shore.

**South Polar Skua:** Three in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC on the morning of 27 May (Daniel Irons) was an incredible count for a species hardly ever seen from shore. On pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC, one was seen 24 May and two were seen 27 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

**Parasitic Jaeger:** 41 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC during an eight-hour period 30 Apr (Daniel Irons) was a remarkable total.

**Common Murre:** One seen in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 7 Apr (Daniel Irons) was especially noteworthy for that late date.

**Thick-billed Murre:** One was seen in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 11 Mar (Daniel Irons)

**Razorbill:** The moderate alcid irruption that occurred along our northern coast in February continued into early spring, evidenced by the count of 6558 Razorbills in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC during an all-day ocean-watch 7 Mar (Daniel Irons).

**Atlantic Puffin:** Sightings of puffins in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC continued from mid-February intermittently through March (Daniel Irons, m. obs.). A few of the higher counts made during all-day ocean-watches at that site were 55 on 1 Mar, 81 on 9 Mar, and 30 on 23 Mar (Irons). One seen there 5 Apr (Irons) was rather late.

**Sabine's Gull:** An adult individual seen in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 13 May (Daniel Irons) was a great find for spring.

**Bonaparte's Gull:** An immature individual photographed on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 15 May (Angie Davis, et al.) was rather late for an inland site.

**Black-headed Gull:** A first-year bird photographed on the northern Core Banks *Carteret* NC 8 May (Matt Spangler) was a good find for that area and also rather late.

**Little Gull:** Eight, six adults and two first-winter birds, in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC during the afternoon of 5 Mar (Daniel Irons) was a remarkable count.

**Heermann's Gull:** An adult, likely the same individual seen at scattered sites along the Atlantic coast for the past two years and at a few sites along the Carolina coast in the past year, was seen at Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 20 May (Haley Olsen-Hodges, Pat Draisey, et al.), at nearby Oregon Inlet later that day (Matt Janson, Sarah Toner), and at Cape Point *Dare* NC 23 May (Daniel Irons).

**Iceland Gull:** One photographed on Currituck Beach *Currituck* NC 1 May (Nathaniel Nye) was somewhat late.

**Bridled Tern:** One seen circling the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 26 May (Daniel Irons) was unusual over land when not following the passage of a tropical storm.

**Roseate Tern:** One had returned to Cape Point *Dare* NC 21 Apr (Daniel Irons) and one or more were seen there intermittently into summer (Irons, m. obs.). A weather-related high count of 12 was made there 12 May (Irons). A leg-banded individual photographed on the west end of Oak Island *Brunswick* NC 2 May (Maria Armstrong) was unusual for that stretch of coast.

**Arctic Tern:** 13 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC, following a shift in wind direction after several days of northerly winds, 13 May (Daniel Irons) was a remarkable count from shore.

**White-tailed Tropicbird:** On pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC, individual adults were seen 13 May and 30 May, and two adults were seen 31 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

**Red-billed Tropicbird:** An immature bird was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 25 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). An adult photographed in flight from Cape Point *Dare* NC 30 May (Ann & Charles Robshaw) was a great find from shore.

**Pacific Loon:** Individuals were seen in Wrightsville Beach *New Hanover* NC continuing from winter intermittently through March (m. obs.) and in eastbound flight from Cape Point *Dare* NC 3 Apr and 30 Apr (Daniel Irons). Three, all in sight at the same time, around Johnnie Mercer's Pier *New Hanover* NC 30 Mar (Sam Cooper) was a notable count for the spring period.

**Yellow-nosed Albatross:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of a Yellow-nosed Albatross seen in eastbound flight from Cape Point *Dare* NC 23 Apr (Daniel Irons). Irons submitted a similar report from this site 13 Feb, still pending review, and it's possible both sightings involve the same individual.

**Wilson's Storm-Petrel:** Sightings were made at multiple sites along the Carolina coast following changes in wind direction/passage of weather systems, 13-16 May and 26 May

into June. A few of the higher counts made from Cape Point *Dare* NC were 386 on 14 May, 274 on 15 May, 460 on 26 May, and 496 on 27 May (Daniel Irons). Ten at Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 15 May (Scott Hartley, m. obs.) was a notable count for SC. One seen on the Cape Fear River at the Port of Wilmington *New Hanover* NC, ~24 miles upstream from Baldhead/Caswell Inlet and ~7.5 miles west of the coast, 15 May (Wayne Hoffman) was a remarkable sighting for a site away from the ocean when not following the passage of a tropical storm.

**European Storm-Petrel:** Individuals were seen and photographed on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 14 May and 3 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). The sighting made 14 May was the earliest in the season ever made in NC, four days earlier than the previous early record, 18 May 2008.



*European Storm-Petrel, 3 Jun 2022, off Hatteras, Dare County, NC. Photograph by Kate Sutherland.*

**Leach's Storm-Petrel:** Two in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 14 May (Daniel Irons), and one on 24 May (Irons), were notable from shore.

**Trindade Petrel:** Individuals were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 27 May and 3 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). Two were photographed from a cruise ship ~ 190 miles southeast of Cape Lookout *Carteret* NC 27 May (Ruben & Victor Stoll). The Stolls also reported seeing eight other Trindade Petrels that day, but before entering United States waters.

**Bermuda Petrel:** Individuals were seen from a cruise ship 50 mile east of Waves *Dare* NC 23 May (Ruben & Victor Stoll) and on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 29 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

**Fea's Petrel:** Fea's Petrels were seen on eight of the 20 spring pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC, 29 Apr through 12 Jun, (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). A count of two birds visiting the chum slick inside a 15-minute span 12 Jun (Patteson, Sutherland, et al.) was notable.

**Sooty Shearwater:** 4965 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC during a ten-hour ocean-watch 27 May (Daniel Irons) was a remarkable total.

**Magnificent Frigatebird:** Individuals were reported from at least six sites along the coast in the latter half of May.

**Masked Booby:** An adult in flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 22 Apr (Daniel Irons) was the likely the same adult individual photographed on the beach at Cape Fear Point *Brunswick* NC 27 Apr (Lauren Schaale, et al.). These sightings are the earliest in the season ever made in the Carolinas, the previous early date being 16 May.

**Brown Booby:** Sightings included an adult in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 5 Apr (Daniel Irons), a juvenile around Cape Point 29 Apr through 7 May (Irons, m. obs.), two juveniles following a cruise ship 90 miles east northeast of Nags Head *Dare* NC 28 May (Ruben & Victor Stoll), and adult/subadult individuals on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC, 15 May, 29 May, 4 Jun, and 10 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

**Northern Gannet:** Five seen over the Pungo River from Wades Point *Beaufort* NC 5 Apr (Trevor Sleight) were unusual for a site that far from the ocean.

**Anhinga:** Two seen in flight over Max Patch Rd in *Haywood* NC 8 May (Kent Fiala) were very unusual for the mountain region.

**Great Cormorant:** The individual seen at Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC throughout winter remained at that site through 3 May (Andrew Thornton). One seen and photographed at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 3-5 May (Jill & Ted Falasco, m. obs.) was rather late for the SC coast.

**American White Pelican:** The high count at the annual late winter/early spring feeding congregation below High Rock Dam *Davidson* and *Rowan* NC was 65 on 11 Mar (Karen Hogan, Teresa Noel).

**Brown Pelican:** A higher than usual number of inland sightings were made this spring. Two on Lake Greenwood *Laurens* SC 25 Apr (Win Ott) and one on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 3 May (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.) were especially unusual for periods of fair weather. Two sightings in the foothills region in late May, however, were likely related to the passage of a strong weather system—an adult on Lake Jocassee *Oconee* SC



27 May (Rocky Nation), and three, two adults and one immature bird, on Lake Lure *Rutherford* NC 28-31 May (Mike Resch, m. obs.).

**Least Bittern:** One heard calling at Ringneck Pond at Pee Dee NWR *Anson* NC 17 Apr (Mike Conway) and 3 May (Greg Hays, Dennis Kent) was unusual for that area. Individuals at Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC 1 May into summer (Chip Gilbert, m. obs.) and at Rocky River Nature Park *Anderson* SC 26 May (Steve Patterson) were notable for upstate SC.

**Tricolored Heron:** Individuals at Crabtree Creek Wetland *Wake* NC 30 Apr through 1 May (John Lynch, m. obs.) and at a golf course pond in Chapel Hill *Orange* NC 27 May (Roger Shaw, m. obs.) were unusual for the Piedmont region in spring.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** Night-herons returned to traditional nesting sites in Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC by 16 Mar (John Haire, m. obs.) in Chapel Hill *Orange* NC by 22 Mar (Teresa Noel), and in Greensboro *Guilford* NC by 1 Apr (James Pretzsch, m. obs.).

**White Ibis:** 1462 counted in flight to roost on Browns/Harkers Island *Carteret* NC on the evening of 31 May (Mark Kosiewski) was a notable count.

**Glossy Ibis:** 13 in flight over Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 7 Apr (Steve Shultz) and an adult at Mills River Park *Henderson* NC 11 Apr (Judith Davis, m. obs.) were unusual for those inland sites.

**Roseate Spoonbill:** All sightings this spring were made along or near the SC coast, the northernmost being one at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 13 Apr into summer (Julie & Ken Davis, m. obs.).

**White-tailed Kite:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photos of an apparent White-tailed Kite at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 8 Apr (Douglas Racine). If accepted, the report would provide the fifth official record for NC and the first since 2001.

**Swallow-tailed Kite:** One seen in flight over south Nags Head *Dare* NC 6 Mar (Sarah Toner) was somewhat early. The early record for this species, 24 Feb, was also made on the Outer Banks, at Pea Island NWR in 2018. 20+ over fields along Governors Rd near Winnabow *Brunswick* NC 23 May (Wayne Hoffman) was a remarkable count for NC.

**Mississippi Kite:** 14 seen in northeast flight over Valle Crucis *Watauga* NC 1 May (Maxwell Ramey) was a remarkable count for the NC High Country, especially for spring.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** A kettle of 26 over Southern Shores *Dare* NC 13 Apr (Jeff Lewis) was a remarkable count for the Outer Banks. Though large groups of migrating Broad-winged Hawks are regular in the mountain region, they are practically unheard-of along the coast.

**Rough-legged Hawk:** One over an agricultural field in northeastern *Guilford* NC 28 Mar (Jeff Turner) was quite unusual for a site in the Piedmont and also somewhat late. Almost all reports in the past decade have come from sites in the mountains/foothills region or the outer coastal plain.

**Short-eared Owl:** Three at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 2 Apr (Sean Leahy, Dawn Lloyd) were somewhat late.

**Red-cockaded Woodpecker:** A total of 14, comprised of four family groups, at Palmetto Peartree Preserve *Tyrrell* NC 27 Apr (Jeff Lewis, et al.) was an encouraging count for that site.

**Gray Kingbird:** One was seen at three sites in *Charleston* SC in late April—in Isle of Palms 22 Apr (Deidre Robinson), at Ft Moultrie 23-24 Apr (Pam Ford, Craig Watson, m. obs.), and at Ft Johnson 26 Apr (Ryan Watson). It is possible that these sightings all involve the same individual, likely an overshot migrant working its way back down the coast to its breeding grounds. Elsewhere along the coast, individuals were seen and photographed along Old Trestle Rd in *Jasper* SC 4-5 May (April Childress), on a powerline in Rodanthe *Dare* NC 29 May (Ruben & Victor Stoll), and at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 29-31 May (Jamie Adams, m. obs.).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** One had returned to the traditional breeding site (since 2019) near the Rock Hill – York County Airport *York* SC 15 Apr (Chris Copeland) and two were seen there 22 Apr (Ric Porter). Two were seen in an agricultural area along Williamson Rd in *York* SC for a second year in a row 3 May (Marcus & Cheryl Morris) where they continued into summer. A pair appeared on territory near the Amazon warehouse in Pineville *Mecklenburg* NC 8 May (Patty Masten, m. obs.), with one seen carrying nesting material 18 May (Richard Snow), where they continued into summer. Individual migrants were seen at Cape Point *Dare* NC 22 Apr (Christopher Gontarski, m. obs.), along the Basin Trail at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 1-5 May (Mark DiGiovanni), in an agricultural area of *Aiken* SC 7 May (Carol Eldridge, m. obs.), near Warren Wilson College *Buncombe* NC 6 May (Kyle & Pat Rice, m. obs.), at Mills River Park *Henderson* NC, possibly the same individual seen in *Buncombe* five days prior, 11 May (Jay Wherley, et al.), in an agricultural area of southwestern *Spartanburg* SC 26 May (Simon Harvey), and at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 30 May (Daniel Irons, m. obs.). The reports from *Buncombe* and *Henderson* were most notable, as there is only one previous record of this species from the NC mountain region.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Only three were reported this spring—individuals at Historic Bethabara Park *Forsyth* NC 29 Apr (John Haire), at Green River Game Land *Polk* NC 8 May (Mike Resch, et al.), and at Ribbonwalk Nature Preserve *Mecklenburg* NC 25-26 May (Lenny Lampel, m. obs.).

**Say's Phoebe:** The individual found along Howerton Rd in *Guilford* NC 16 Oct (Jon Randolph) continued at that site intermittently throughout the winter and early spring (m. obs.) until last seen 11 Apr (Sean Leahy, Dawn Lloyd). One seen and photographed

along Belville Rd in southern *Rockingham* NC, 12 miles northwest of the site along Howerton Rd, 15 Apr (Marty Wall, m. obs.) was likely the same individual.

**Red-eyed Vireo:** One photographed near Ravenel *Charleston* SC 20 Mar (Carl & Cathy Miller) was somewhat early.

**Black-whiskered Vireo:** One was seen at Hatteras Point *Dare* NC 4 May & 14 May (Daniel Irons).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** One seen at Hatteras Point *Dare* NC 11 Apr (Daniel Irons) was unusual for the Outer Banks.

**Common Raven:** Individuals, likely the same individual, were reported at two sites along the Outer Banks—in flight over Cape Point *Dare* NC 29 Apr (Daniel Irons, m. obs.) and photographed on top of a telephone pole in Salvo *Dare* NC 15 May (*fide* Karen Lebing). Dare County's first record of this species was made just one year ago, 17 Apr 2021, and both reports are pending review by the NC BRC.

**Cave Swallow:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of a Cave Swallow at Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 10 Mar (Michael Plauché). Interestingly, a similar report was made from this same site 26 Mar 2020, still pending review. Two seen near Cape Point *Dare* NC 26 Apr (Daniel Irons) were very unusual for the latter half of spring.

**Cedar Waxwing:** 342 feeding in trees in downtown Youngsville Franklin NC 23 May (Jeremy Wrenn) was a notable count for late May.

**Mountain Bluebird:** The male Mountain Bluebird discovered in Wrightsville Beach *New Hanover* NC 11 Feb (Ken Hackney, m. obs.) continued at that site until last seen 21 Mar (Curtis Downey).



*Mountain Bluebird,  
14 Feb 2022,  
Wrightsville Beach,  
New Hanover County, NC.  
Photograph by Stacy  
Barbour.*

**Hermit Thrush:** One photographed at Hunting Island SP *Beaufort* SC 25 May (Christopher Wilson) was quite late for any site away from our higher mountains.

**Lark Sparrow:** Individual migrants were found along Buck Rd in southeastern *Pitt* NC 17 Mar (Thomas Kelafant), at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 18-21 Apr (Natalie Gruppuso, m. obs.), and in an agricultural area of northern *Greenville* SC 25 Apr (Michael Robertson). For a second year in a row a pair acted as if on territory in an agricultural area along Champion Rd in southern *York* SC, this year 20 May into summer (Marcus & Cheryl Morris, m. obs.).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Individuals were reported at five sites this spring, 3 Apr through 3 May. One photographed at Sandhills Game Land *Scotland* NC 3 Apr (Ann Stinely) was a first for that county. One seen and then photographed at the Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 3 May (Michael Plauché, m. obs.) was somewhat late.

**Vesper Sparrow:** 28 at Blue Clay Bike Park *New Hanover* NC 3 Apr (Sam Cooper) was a notable count.

**LeConte's Sparrow:** One photographed at the Voice of America site in *Beaufort* NC 20 Apr (Suzanne Roberts) was the only report this spring.

**Nelson's Sparrow:** Individual migrants photographed at Owen Park *Buncombe* NC 14 May (Ronan Nicholson, Silas Powell, et al.) and along Pisgah National Forest Fish Hatchery Rd in *Transylvania* NC 16 May (Danny Bales) were good finds inland.

**Henslow's Sparrow:** One audio-recorded singing at Carolina Beach SP *New Hanover* NC 6 May (Andy Fairbanks, et al.) was unusual for a site so near the coast.

**Savannah Sparrow:** Eight in an agricultural area just southeast of Mills River *Henderson* NC 29 May (Michael Plauché) was suggestive of possible breeding there.

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** Individual migrants were reported at eight sites from the mountains to the inner coastal plain, 19 Apr through 10 May (m. obs.).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** A female visited a yard on Ladys Island *Beaufort* SC 15-16 Apr (Tammy Hester). An immature male seen and photographed at The Ocean Course (restricted access) on the eastern end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 29 May through 4 Jun (Jordan Juzdowski, m. obs.) was especially unusual so late in the spring season.

**Northern Waterthrush:** One seen and photographed at Brevard College *Transylvania* NC 7 Mar through 1 Apr (Michael Plauché, m. obs.) was extremely early for the mountain region, more likely an over-winterer than early returning migrant. Typically, the handful of Northern Waterthrushes that over-winter in the Carolinas do so at sites along the coast.

**Golden-winged Warbler:** An adult male seen around the Old Coast Guard Station on the southern side of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 3 May (Daniel Irons) was extremely unusual for the Outer Banks in spring.

**Tennessee Warbler:** One visiting a feeder in *Lexington* SC 2 Mar through 5 Apr (Irvin Pitts, m. obs.) likely over-wintered in our region.

**Connecticut Warbler:** Four reports were made this spring, all in the western part of our region in May—individual singing males audio-recorded at Fants Grove WMA *Anderson* SC 6 May (Kevin Kubach, et al.), heard and then seen along Park Creek in *Macon* NC 10 May (Chris Kelly), heard at Jackson Park *Henderson* NC 14 May (Kevin Burke, m. obs.), and photographed at the NC Arboretum *Buncombe* NC 19 May (Jonathan Marchal, m. obs.).

**Mourning Warbler:** An adult male seen and photographed at Hamilton Lakes Park *Guilford* NC 15-18 May (Elizabeth & Henry Link, m. obs.) was the only one reported this spring.

**American Redstart:** An adult male photographed at Congaree Creek Heritage Preserve *Lexington* SC 20 Mar (Tracy Martin, m. obs.) was somewhat early.

**Cape May Warbler:** Individuals photographed in Nags Head *Dare* NC 2 Mar (Matt Janson), at a feeder in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 9-13 Mar (Deb Winter), and in a yard in *Lexington* SC 24 Mar (Irvin Pitts) likely over-wintered in our region.

**Blackburnian Warbler:** An adult male photographed at Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest *Graham* NC 10 Apr (David & Zachary Peterson) was rather early.

**Wilson's Warbler:** One photographed at a feeder in Summerville *Dorchester* SC 5 Mar (Bruce Krucke) likely wintered in our region.

**Western Tanager:** Individuals visiting feeders during the late winter continued to late March and early April at multiple sites, including one on Seabrook Island *Charleston* SC, first seen 27 Dec and last seen 10 Apr (Joleen Ardaiole, m. obs.). Individuals showed up at feeders for the first time this year in Raleigh *Wake* NC 20 Mar through 26 Apr (Patty McQuillan, m. obs.) and in Morehead City *Carteret* NC 29 Mar through 3 Apr (John Fussell, m. obs.). Individual males on Parris Island (restricted access) *Beaufort* SC 16 Apr (Steven Guy) and along Six Mile Creek Greenway *Mecklenburg* NC, where photographed, 23 Apr (Stephanie Simpson, et al.) were unusual for sites away from feeders.

**Lazuli Bunting:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of a Lazuli Bunting in a suburban area of western *Wake* NC 10 May (Vikas Madhav Nagarajan). There are only three accepted reports of this species in NC.

**Painted Bunting:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent adult male Painted Bunting visiting a feeder in Asheville *Buncombe* NC, 1-5

Apr (Jess West, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the third record of this species at a site in the NC mountains. An adult female at Prairie Ridge Eco-station *Wake* NC 20 Apr (Jeff Beane) and a singing immature male in Mineral Springs *Union* NC 13 May (Martina Nordstrand) were unusual for sites in the Piedmont region.

**Dickcissel:** Dickcissels began showing up at known/suspected breeding sites in very late April and early May. Two of the higher counts were six, five singing males and one female, along Snow Mill Drive in *Spartanburg* SC 16 May (Simon Harvey) and five, four singing males and one female, near the intersection of Beville Rd and Benaja Rd in *Rockingham* NC 29 May (Marty Wall). Two, likely migrants and not on territory, near Brevard *Transylvania* NC 6 May (Michael Plauché) was a notable count for the mountain region.



H. Douglas Pratt

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- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

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# The Chat

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# THE CHAT

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## General Field Notes

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Cover: Slaty-backed Gull in Horry County, NC. Photograph by Christopher E. Hill.

# First Record of Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*) for South Carolina

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## Introduction

I report the first documented occurrence of Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*) in South Carolina. The record was accepted by the South Carolina Bird Record Committee in June 2022 (decision archived at Carolina Bird Club website <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/brc/SC/reports.html>). Slaty-backed Gull becomes the sixteenth gull species documented for South Carolina.

Slaty-backed Gulls breed in Siberia and winter largely in Japan, North Korea, and South Korea (Malling Olson 2018). They are regular but rare in Alaska, occur annually on the Pacific Coast of North America, and annually in the last decade in the Great Lakes region, but are rare strays to the rest of the continent, especially south of about 37° North (McKee et al. 2014).

The only previous record in the Carolinas was in North Carolina on 16 February 2003 (LeGrand et al. 2005). In the rest of the southeastern U.S. prior to this sighting, the only accepted records were two from Florida (Fig. 1).

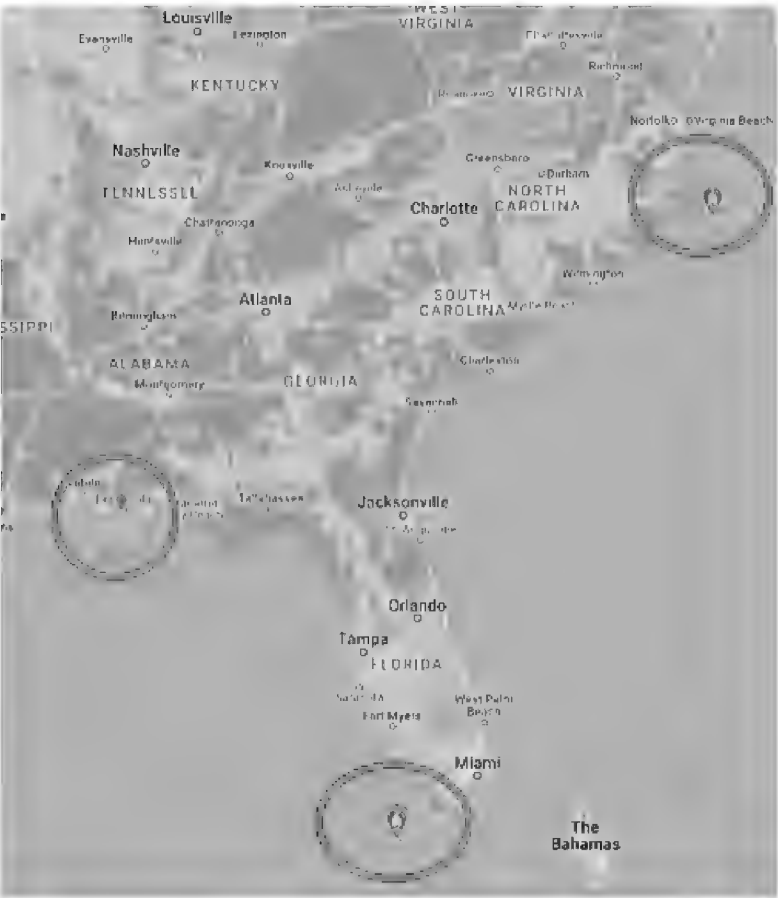


Figure 1. Prior records of Slaty-backed Gull in eBird in the southeastern United States. Red-circled, blue markers indicate three previous occurrences. Image provided by eBird ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)), created 12 May 2022.

### Observations

On 3 January 2022, while participating in a trial run of a new Christmas Bird Count centered on Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve in Horry County, South Carolina, I visited the Horry County landfill, off Route 90 east of Conway, SC. In a flock composed mostly of about 1500 Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*) with half a dozen each of Lesser Black-backed (*L. fuscus*) and Great Black-backed Gulls (*L. marinus*) and numerous Ring-billed (*L. delawarensis*) and Laughing Gulls (*Leucophaeus atricilla*), I noticed an adult gull with a medium dark mantle that struck me as different from the Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

I approached the gull and noted its pink legs and feet. Perhaps due to strong winds, gusting to over 50 kph, the gulls seemed to be content to let me approach fairly closely. Only those gulls within about 15m lifted off to resettle a little farther away, so I was able to obtain many photographs of the bird that showed field marks consistent with Slaty-backed Gull (Figs 2-8).



Figure 2. Slaty-backed Gull at Horry County, SC, Landfill on 3 January 2022, with Laughing Gulls (foreground) and Herring Gulls (background). Note medium gray mantle, straight-sided bill, tan head mottling, broad white tertial crescent and pink legs. On the folded primaries note that the fourth white primary tip from the end of the wing (P7) appears as a double bump of white, which is the primary tip of P7 next to the white tongue on P8. The same pattern is visible on P6-P7 just proximal.



Figure 3. Slaty-backed Gull in flight. In this underexposed photo, note the wide white trailing edge to the secondaries, the head mottling, and the large white mirror on P10 (contacting the white apical primary spot) and the medium sized white mirror on P9, as well as the head mottling and bill shape. Photo from Horry County, SC, Landfill on 3 January 2022.



Figure 4. Slaty-backed Gull taking flight with Herring Gulls. This photo shows the “string of pearls” white tongue-tips on the primaries of the far wing particularly well. Photo from Horry County, SC, Landfill on 3 January 2022.



Figure 5. Note that the underside of the primaries appears gray on the Slaty-backed Gull, not black because the black color on each primary is largely confined to the outer web, unlike, for example, the underside in Herring Gulls. Photo from Horry County, SC, Landfill on 3 January 2022.



Figure 6. Slaty-backed Gull with Lesser Black-backed, Laughing, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls. This photo shows the mantle color as approximately as dark as the mantle of the Lesser Black-back in front of it, but the Slaty-backed's gray is slightly more leaden, and the Lesser Black-back's mantle is slightly bluer gray. Photo from Horry County, SC, Landfill on 3 January 2022.



Figure 7. Slaty-backed showing gray iris with barely visible pale pink orbital ring. Photo from Horry County, SC, Landfill on 3 January 2022.





Figure 8. Slaty-backed Gull (far right) with Great Black-backed (far left) and Herring Gulls. Although blurry, this photo shows differences in the head and bill shape and markings, and the mantle shade, between the Slaty-backed and an adult Great Black-backed Gull. Photo from Horry County, SC, Landfill on 3 January 2022.

The important features visible on this gull include 1) size approximately that of a Herring Gull, with 2) pink legs and feet; 3) a straight-sided bill, not thick or bulbous as on a Great Black-backed or Western Gull (*Larus occidentalis*); 4) a medium dark mantle and upper wing, about as dark as that of the race of Lesser Black-backed Gull that winters in eastern North America (*L. f. graellsii*), and paler than an adult Great Black-backed; 5) a broad white trailing edge to the secondaries; 6) black in the outer primaries separated from the gray in the proximal part of those primaries by white tongue-tips in a “string of pearls” pattern; 7) large white apical spots on each primary, and 8) considerable tan mottling on the head and neck, typical of a bird in winter plumage. The eye on Slaty-backs is described as “pale yellow, sometimes dark-peppered” (Malling Olsen 2018). The irides of this bird were not yellow but gray with pink orbital rings. This eye color is found regularly on Slaty-backs (Alvaro Jaramillo, pers. comm.), and this exact color combination can be found in photographs of Slaty-backs wintering in Japan (see, e.g., Cowton 2006).

The bird continued to be seen at the Horry County landfill by many observers (57 total reports to eBird) through 8 January 2022, but apparently was not seen after that date despite further visits from birders.

## Discussion

With large white-headed gulls, not only is there much within-species variability, but most taxa hybridize at least occasionally; some, routinely (Hoffman et al. 1978). In the last two decades many advanced guides and articles have been published covering gull identification, but a firm identification of a vagrant such as Slaty-backed Gull in South Carolina depends on the combination of many features.

Of the most likely species for confusion, Great Black-backed has a darker mantle, a clean white head in winter and a stouter bill; Western has a clean white head in winter, a very

stout bill and less white in the wingtip; and Lesser Black-backed has yellow legs and a more slender and attenuated body shape, with head markings in winter most often dusky streaks rather than tan mottling.

The taxon that could appear most similar to a Slaty-backed, I believe, would be a Great Black-back x Herring Gull hybrid, which could perhaps duplicate the mantle tone, body structure and pink legs. However, birds that have been identified as this combination occur mostly on the Great Lakes rather than the East Coast, and I have not been able to find photographs of any that have the broad white trailing edge to the wing typical of Slaty-backed, as shown in this bird.

A Slaty-backed Gull that appeared in Maryland on 14 January 2022 (Carney 2022), Maryland's first record of the species, shares many features (bill shape and coloration, head markings, details of primary patterning) with the South Carolina bird and may have been the same individual.

### Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the management and staff of the Horry County Solid Waste Authority for allowing birder access to their facility, and particularly to Wayne Martin, who arranged more extensive access for the Christmas Bird Count. I very much appreciate the correspondents on the Facebook group North American Gulls, including its founder Amar Ayyash, who have always been generous in sharing their expertise. I thank Alvaro Jaramillo in particular for pointing out several field characters visible in these photos of the South Carolina bird which I would have otherwise missed. I am indebted to Gene Knight of the Mississippi Ornithological Society, who helped me track down the history of a 1993 Slaty-backed Gull report in Mississippi, which was originally accepted but later rejected and removed from the state list.

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# BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Summer 2022, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.*

<i>Winter</i>	<i>December 1–February 28</i>	<i>due March 20</i>
<i>Spring</i>	<i>March 1–May 31</i>	<i>due June 20</i>
<i>Summer</i>	<i>June 1–July 31</i>	<i>due August 20</i>
<i>Fall</i>	<i>August 1–November 30</i>	<i>due December 20</i>

*Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location) and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.*

*Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.*

*Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.*

*I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.*

*If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.*

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park

*All italicized place names are counties.*

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** 19 in flight over Ocean Isle Beach Brunswick NC 4 Jul (Taylor Piephoff) were unusual over the ocean and a notable count for NC. Two photographed at Lake Surf Moore NC 11 Jun (John German, m. obs.) were a first for that county. Most other reports from NC this summer involved pairs or small flocks at sites on

and around the Albemarle / Pamlico peninsula. Farthest inland in SC was one in Clemson *Pickens* 22 Jul (Colby Denison).

**Northern Shoveler:** A drake photographed in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 18 Jun (Elizabeth & Henry Link) was unusual for summer, especially for an inland site.

**Northern Pintail:** A seemingly healthy drake lingered on Oak Hollow Lake *Guilford* NC from 26 Apr through 9 Jul (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.).

**Ring-necked Duck:** A drake summered on a small pond along US-1 in southern *Lee* NC (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton, m. obs.) for a sixth year in a row.

**Common Eider:** Latest to depart this summer was one at Hatteras Inlet *Dare* NC 26 Jun (Davis Balser, Matt Janson).

**Surf Scoter:** Six, two drakes and four hens, photographed at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 11 Jul (Stacy & Natalie Barbour) were notable for mid-summer.

**Common Merganser:** Counts of family groups on rivers in the NC mountains included ten on the Green River in *Polk* 25 Jun (Aimee Tomcho), 14 on the Tuckasegee River in *Jackson* 14-16 Jul (Tom Quetchenbach) and in neighboring *Swain* 22-26 Jul (Milton Hobbs, m. obs.), and seven on the South Toe River in *Yancey* 19 Jul (Debbie Segal).

**White-winged Dove:** Individuals visited feeders in northeastern *Randolph* NC 12 Jun (Ginger Walter), in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 12-15 Jun (Deb Winter), and in Waves *Dare* NC 18 Jul (Karen Lebing).

**Rufous Hummingbird:** An adult male photographed at a feeder in Southport *Brunswick* NC 10-11 Jul (Carol & Robert Cowan, David Wilson) was very unusual for the summer period.



Rufous  
Hummingbird,  
11 July 2022,  
Southport,  
Brunswick  
County, NC.  
Photograph by  
David Wilson.

**Clapper Rail:** One photographed along the edge of Watson Lake *Moore* NC 19 Jun (Kate Hendricks) was very unusual for an inland site in summer. Typically, sightings at sites away from the coast only occur in spring or fall.

**King Rail:** 32 at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 14 Jun (Nicolas Main) was a notable count.

**Limpkin:** Breeding was confirmed for a third year in a row at the upper end of Goose Creek Reservoir *Berkeley* SC when four juveniles were seen there with two adults 2 Jun (Craig Watson). Up to five continued through the summer at the site in southern *Horry* SC where breeding was confirmed in May 2021 and again in May 2022. One seen and photographed at the upper end of Lake Robinson *Greenville* SC 1 Jun through 18 Jul (Frank Erk, m. obs.) was the only sighting made away from those two known breeding sites.

**Sandhill Crane:** Individual adults photographed in Newport *Carteret* NC 14 Jun (Rachel McGee) and at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 18 Jun (Betty Sue Cohen) were unusual for summer. It is likely both reports involved the same wandering individual.

**Black-necked Stilt:** One at Lake Surf *Moore* NC 9 Jun (Jacob Clark) was a great find inland and a first for that county. Farthest inland in SC were five at Horse Creek Water Treatment Plant (restricted access) *Aiken* 9 Jul (Peter Stangel). That site, along with nearby sites in *Aiken* and neighboring *Richmond* Georgia, has become a somewhat regular stop-over for small numbers of stilts, mostly in May and July-August, since the species was first noted in that area in 2004.

**Pacific Golden-Plover:** One seen and photographed at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 6 Jul (Daniel Irons) through 30 Jul (m. obs.) was almost certainly the same individual seen at that site for the past three summers. Interestingly, this year's arrival date, 6 Jul, was the same as in 2020 and only two days off last year's arrival date, 8 Jul.

**Upland Sandpiper:** Like most years, southbound migrants began trickling through in late July. Sightings included one at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 23 Jul (Daniel Irons), two at the Manteo Airport *Dare* NC 27-28 Aug (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.), and five at Vandemark Sod in *Nash* NC 31 Jul (Ricky Davis).

**Long-billed Curlew:** One on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 25 Jun (Jamie Adams, et al.) was the only one reported this period.

**Ruff:** A molting adult male at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 18 Jun (Nicholas Main) was very unusual for June. One wonders if this individual was the same molting adult male seen and photographed in *Georgetown* SC three weeks earlier 28-30 May (James Fillmore, m. obs.).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** One seen at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 24 Jun (Daniel Irons) was somewhat early.

**Sanderling:** One at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 24 Jul (Ricky Davis) and two at that site 29 Jul (Trevor Sleight) were the only inland reports this period.

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** A higher than usual number of sightings were made in early June, some of which were likely related to the offshore passage of Tropical Storm Alex. A few of the higher counts included 46 at Cape Point *Dare* NC 4 Jun (Daniel Irons), 17 in northern *Beaufort* SC 9 Jun (Andy Jones, Chris Marsh, Jake Zadik), and 11 at a pond along Burma Rd in *Lexington* SC 11 Jun (Charlie Spencer).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** One at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 28-30 Jul (Anne Ruben, m. obs.) was somewhat early.

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** One photographed at the northern end of Coddle Creek Reservoir *Cabarrus* NC 11 Jun (Taylor Piephoff, Greg Hays) was quite late, especially for a site so far from the coast.

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** One at North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 17 Jun (Heather Buttonow) was unusual for mid-summer.

**Willet:** Five in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 10 Jul (Matt Wangerin) was a remarkable count for the Piedmont region in summer.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** Sightings involved three at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 8 Jul (Steve Calver), one at J. Morgan Futch Game Land *Tyrrell* NC 12 Jul (Matt Janson), one at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 12-13 Jul (Justin Hall, m. obs.), and one at Pea Island NWR 28 Jul (Andrew Thornton).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** Two on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 6 Jun (William Gay) were notable for the SC coast. One along the Pitt Street Causeway *Charleston* SC 11 Jul (Elizabeth Anderegg, m. obs.) was very unusual for the SC coast in mid-summer.

**South Polar Skua:** Amazingly, skuas were seen in flight over the ocean from Cape Point *Dare* NC on five dates this summer—on 7 Jun (Daniel Irons), 8 Jun (Irons), 21 Jun (Andrew Thornton), 26 Jun (Irons), and 3 Jul (Irons).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** A total of 22 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC during an all-day ocean-watch 7 Jun (Daniel Irons) was an amazing count from shore.

**Long-tailed Jaeger:** Seven in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC during an all-day ocean-watch 7 Jun (Daniel Irons) was a notable count.

**Dovekie:** A moribund individual photographed on the beach of Portsmouth Island *Carteret* NC 25 Jun (Will Britton) was extremely unusual for summer.

**Sabine's Gull:** One seen in southbound flight off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 10 Jul (Matt Janson) and, very likely the same individual, from the ferry at Hatteras Inlet *Dare* NC 11

Jul (Daniel Irons) was extremely unusual for the summer period. There is only one previous record of this species in the Carolinas during the summer.

**Laughing Gull:** For a third summer in a row an immature bird was seen and photographed on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC, this year 18 Jun (Patty Masten, et al.). Most sightings of this species at sites in the Piedmont region are made in spring and fall.

**Heermann's Gull:** An adult Heermann's Gull photographed on the beach at Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC 11 Jun (Chris Huffstickler, m. obs.) was almost certainly the same individual reported at multiple sites along the Atlantic coast the past couple of years.

**Roseate Tern:** Eight around the northern end of Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 23 Jun (Daniel Irons) was a notable count for a site away from Cape Point.

**Common Tern:** Three on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 17 Jun and 30 Jul (Patty Masten, et al.) were unusual for the Piedmont region in summer.

**Forster's Tern:** Two on Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 12 Jul (Steve Patterson, m. obs.) were unusual for the mountain region and rather early for an inland site.

**Royal Tern:** One photographed in flight over Carolina Lake *Rockingham* NC 25 Jul (Marty Wall) was extremely unusual for a site in the Piedmont region when not following the passage of a tropical storm.

**Black Skimmer:** One photographed at Goose Creek Game Land *Beaufort* NC 2 Jul (Caleb Bronsink) was unusual for a site away from the coast and a first for that county.

**Wilson's Storm-Petrel:** The offshore passage of Tropical Storm Alex likely contributed to high from-shore counts made from Cape Point *Dare* NC 7-8 Jun, with 535 on 7 Jun (Daniel Irons) and 817 on 8 Jun (Irons).

**Leach's Storm-Petrel:** Two in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 7 Jun (Daniel Irons) and 12 Jun (Ricky Davis) were notable from shore.

**Cory's Shearwater:** The offshore passage of Tropical Storm Alex contributed to high counts at Cape Point *Dare* NC 7-8 Jun, with 6127 on 7 Jun (Daniel Irons) and 3915 on 8 Jun (Irons).

**Sooty Shearwater:** One photographed resting on the beach of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 12 Jun (Aaron Given) was unusual for the SC coast.

**Great Shearwater:** This species was well-reported from shore this period, with the majority of sightings taking place around the offshore passage of Tropical Storm Alex 5-6 Jun and Tropical Storm Colin 2-3 Jul. The peak counts at Cape Point *Dare* NC were, during Alex, 1799 on 7 Jun (Daniel Irons), and, during Colin, an astounding 5532 on 2 Jul (Irons). Three found resting on the beach of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC, 2 Jul (Aaron Given) was a notable count for SC. Not unusually, there were multiple reports of



moribund or emaciated/exhausted birds found on beaches this summer, mostly during periods following the passage of offshore weather systems.

**Audubon's Shearwater:** Two in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC during Tropical Storm Alex 7 Jun (Daniel Irons) and during Tropical Storm Colin 3 Jul (Irons) were notable as this shearwater species is only very rarely seen from shore.

**Wood Stork:** An immature individual photographed near Glendale *Spartanburg* SC 9 Jul (Neil Owens, m. obs.) was somewhat early for a site that far inland. Locally unusual were eight in a swampy area along Wiggins Mill Rd in *Wilson* NC 3 Jul (Ricky Davis) and 44 in *Edgecombe* NC 27 Jul (Trevor Sleight).

**Magnificent Frigatebird:** Multiple sightings, most of individuals, were made along the coast following changes in wind direction, primarily 1-2 Jun, 9-10 Jun, and 17-31 Jul. Two immatures photographed in flight together over Cape Point *Dare* NC 21 Jul (Chelsea Weithman, m. obs.) and, possibly the same pair, at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 27 Jul (Teresa Kopec) were notable. Three immature birds photographed in flight together over Bald Head Island *Brunswick* NC 29 Jul (Jenna Albaugh, Callie Moyers, Bailey Parkhouse, et al.) were especially notable.

**Masked Booby:** Two were reported this summer—an adult photographed on the beach at Cape Lookout *Carteret* NC 1 Jun (Jon Altman) and an immature bird seen in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC, following the offshore passage of Tropical Storm Alex, 7 Jun (Daniel Irons).

**Anhinga:** As usual, post-breeding dispersal resulted in sightings far inland of the species' breeding range. Farthest inland was one on Rhodhiss Lake *Burke* NC 22-24 Jul (Caroline Martin).

**Neotropic Cormorant:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Neotropic Cormorant at Martin Marietta Park in New Bern *Craven* NC 30 Jul into fall (Trevor Sleight, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the second record for NC.

**Brown Pelican:** Three photographed on Lake Hickory *Catawba* NC 7 Jun (*fide* Dwayne Martin) may have been the same three wandering pelicans seen on Lake Lure *Rutherford* NC in late May. Individuals on Lake Murray *Lexington* SC 14 Jul (Zach Steinhauser), over Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 23 Jul (*fide* Ann Bailes), and on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 27 Jul (Chris Huffstickler) were notable for inland sites.

**Least Bittern:** A pair successfully nested at Lake Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC, as, after the pair was seen at the site throughout June, a juvenile was photographed there 3 Jul (Simon Harvey, m. obs.). Individuals heard calling at Flat River Waterfowl Impoundment *Durham* NC 2-11 Jun (Larry Frauen, m. obs.) and along the Rocky River in western *Cabarrus* NC 5-8 Jun (Taylor Piephoff, et al.) were suggestive of attempted breeding at those sites.

**Reddish Egret:** Oddly, this summer's high count was also this summer's northernmost sighting—seven on Portsmouth Island *Carteret* NC 17 Jul (Daniel Irons).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Breeding was confirmed in NC Piedmont for the first time when two recently-fledged juveniles were seen alongside four adults at Lake Twitty *Union* NC 13 Jun (Dennis Kent).

**Roseate Spoonbill:** Post-breeding dispersal began in mid-June with pairs at Lake Surf *Moore* NC 16 Jun through 9 Jul (John Bird, m. obs.) and in eastern Chapel Hill *Orange* NC 18 Jun (Teresa Noel, m. obs.) being the first inland sightings. Sightings made in the Piedmont region included two at the upper end of Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 30 Jun through 13 Jul (Mark DiGiovanni, m. obs.), one at Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 5-14 Jul (Amy Hanson, m. obs.), one near Glendale *Spartanburg* SC 9 Jul (Neil Owens), one at Lake Wheeler *Wake* NC 13 Jul into fall (Dale Lambert, m. obs.), one in Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC 15 Jul (Cindy Trivette), three along the Broad River in *Fairfield* SC 16-20 Jul (David Dobson, m. obs.), one in *Greenville* SC 20 Jul (Dan Zankman), one along the Catawba River *Catawba* NC 20 Jul and 29 Jul (Caroline Martin), and one along Eighteenmile Creek *Anderson* SC 22 Jul (Kevin Kubach, m. obs.).

**Swallow-tailed Kite:** A total of 77 in flight over agricultural fields in northwestern *Pender* NC 4 Jul (Ricky Davis) was a remarkable concentration as well as the highest count ever made in NC. One wonders if any of these birds had nested nearby or had they all already dispersed from their breeding grounds? In mid-July kites began showing up at sites in the Piedmont with one over Lewisville *Forsyth* NC 18 Jul (Eric & Janet Scharling), six over an agricultural area in southeastern *Union* NC 18 Jul (Dennis Kent), four in *York* SC 24 Jul (Marcus & Cheryl Morris, m. obs.), and 12 in *Anderson* SC (Denise DuPon, et al.). By the end of July a few kites had dispersed all the way to the mountain region with one over Brevard *Transylvania* NC 29 Jul (Nathaniel Axtell), one over Cove Creek *Watauga* NC 30 Jul (Melanie Furr, et al.), one over the Blue Ridge Parkway in *McDowell* NC 30 Jul (Lucas Bobay), and four over Harmon Field *Polk* NC 31 Jul (Cheryl Day, m. obs.).



Swallow-tailed Kite,  
5 July 2022,  
northwestern  
Pender County, NC.  
Photograph by Kent  
Fiala.

**Northern Harrier:** One lingered at the Voice of America site in *Beaufort* NC through most of the summer, from spring through 27 Jul (John McKay, Abbie Valine, m. obs.).

**Mississippi Kite:** One photographed in flight over Waves *Dare* NC 2 Jun (Karen Lebing) and, presumably the same individual, seen later that day over Cape Point *Dare* NC (Michael Gosselin, m. obs.) and Ocracoke *Hyde* NC (John Lynch), was unusual for the Outer Banks. Two immature birds photographed in Reidsville *Rockingham* NC 12 Jul (Marty Wall) were suggestive of nesting in that area.

**Western Kingbird:** One photographed along Long Curve Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 17 Jul (Lee & Ryan Justice) was very unusual for the summer period.

**Gray Kingbird:** One seen along Dow Rd in Kure Beach *New Hanover* NC 2 Jun (Sam Cooper) may have been the same individual seen a few days earlier at nearby Ft Fisher 29-31 May (Jamie Adams, m. obs.).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** The pair found on territory near the Amazon warehouse in Pineville *Mecklenburg* NC 8 May (Patty Masten, m. obs.) successfully nested at that site this summer, as four juveniles were seen alongside the two adults in late June (m. obs.). The pair seen along Williamson Rd in *York* SC for a second year in a row may have nested in that area, as three birds including up to two juveniles were intermittently reported through the summer (m. obs.). Breeding was likely unsuccessful at the traditional nesting site near the Rock Hill – York County Airport *York* SC as no more than two were reported at that site. Sightings away from suspected breeding sites involved individuals at Simpson Research Station *Anderson* SC 5 Jun (Linda Montgomery), along I-85 in *Cherokee* SC 21 Jun (Jeff Tell), at Shaw Air Force Base *Sumter* SC 25 Jun (Clare Ormesher), and in eastern *Burke* NC in late June and 1 Jul (*fide* Dwayne Martin).



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 8 June 2022, Pineville, Mecklenburg County, NC.  
Photograph by Kent Fiala.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** A singing male acted as if on territory in Pisgah National Forest in northeastern *Buncombe* NC along its border with *Yancey*, at ~ 5500 feet above sea level, 9-17 Jun (Kevin Caldwell, m. obs.), where audio-recorded and photographed by multiple observers. There still is no documented evidence of nesting by this species in the Carolinas.

**Blue-headed Vireo:** Six singing males at Ft Bragg (restricted access) in *Hoke* NC 8 Jun (Duncan Fraser) was a good count for that disjunct breeding population. Also in the Sandhills, successful nesting was confirmed in southwestern *Moore* NC where two juveniles were seen begging from an adult 25 Jul (Martina Nordstrand).

**Common Raven:** Six near the Martin Marietta Garner Quarry *Wake* NC 15 Jun (Clyde Sorenson) was a notable count for a site near the edge of the coastal plain.

**Cliff Swallow:** Notable counts were made at two under-bridge colonies on the Trent River in *Jones* NC—100 in Pollocksville 21 Apr (Will Bennett) and 70 in Oak Grove 16 Jun (David Allen). 12 were seen at the breeding colony where US-17 crosses the Roanoke River in Williamston *Martin* NC, first noted in 2014, 9 Jun (Steve Semanchuk, Liz Skiles). 20 in a colony where NC-33 crosses the Tar River in Tarboro *Edgecombe* NC 17 Jun (Patty McQuillan) were notable for that county. 1070 at the Modern Turf Farm in Rembert *Sumter* SC 24 Jul (Andrew Lydeard) was a remarkable concentration of post-breeding birds.

**Swainson's Thrush:** One recorded singing along Flannery Fork Rd in *Watauga* NC, at 3600 feet above sea level, 10 Jun (Sheryl McNair) was suggestive of attempted breeding in that area.

**Purple Finch:** A singing male photographed and audio-recorded in a yard in Waves *Dare* NC 1 Jun (Karen Lebing) was extremely late.

**Bachman's Sparrow:** One photographed along Pineland Forest Rd in western *Newberry* SC 30 Jun (Scott Harris) was unusual for that area.

**Lark Sparrow:** The pair acting as if on territory along Champion Rd in southern *York* SC in late May continued at that site through 16 Jul (Tim Kalbach). It is likely that the pair nested there, as at least one was seen carrying food on 25 Jun (Marcus & Cheryl Morris) and 5 Jul (Irvin Pitts).

**White-throated Sparrow:** One photographed under a feeder in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 14 Jun (Chelsea Bullock) was very late to depart.

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** Individuals photographed in Emerald Isle *Carteret* NC 4 Jul (Georgia & Randy Mason, *fide* John Fussell) and at Pine Island Audubon Sanctuary *Currituck* NC 18 Jul (Matt Janson, Patty Masten) were unusual for those barrier islands, likely early migrants.

**Swainson's Warbler:** Three, two adults and an attendant juvenile, mist-netted at a banding project in southern *Randolph* NC in July (John Gerwin) likely nested in that area.

**Tennessee Warbler:** One seen near Micaville *Yancey* NC 30 Jul (Lucas Bobay) was quite early.

**Blackburnian Warbler:** An adult male photographed at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 2 Jun (Michael Schall) was quite late.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** A female photographed at Hunting Island SP *Beaufort* SC 7 Jun (Jenn Clementoni) was very late.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** Four singing males at Hanging Rock SP *Stokes* NC 1 Jun (Nan Dewire) were likely attempting to breed at that site.

**Painted Bunting:** A singing adult male seen by many at Dorothea Dix Park *Wake* NC 17 Jul through mid-August (m. obs.) was unusual for that area.



Painted Bunting, 23 July 2022,  
Dorothea Dix Park, Raleigh,  
Wake County, NC. Photograph  
by Liling Warren.

**Dickcissel:** Counts at known/suspected breeding sites included four, three singing males and one female, along Howerton Rd in *Guilford* NC 2 Jul (Fleeta Chauvigne, et al.) and three singing males along Mount Olive Rd just north of Cowpens *Spartanburg* SC 29-30 Jul (Steve Patterson, m. obs.). A singing adult male in northwestern *Chatham* NC 6-12 Jun (Roger Shaw, m. obs.) was locally unusual. A singing adult male at a park in *Pasquotank* NC for a second summer in a row, this year 21 Jun through 2 Jul (Greg Hudson, m. obs.), was suggestive of attempted breeding at that site.

# Fifty Years Ago in The Chat

Steve Shultz

The September 1972 issue of *The Chat* featured a black and white photograph of a basic plumaged Ruddy Turnstone on the cover. Comparison of *Chats* from the early 70s to today highlights significant improvements in camera and optics technology, as well as the relative ease in handling of modern electronic photographs. The September 1972 issue contained a General Field Note on the first North Carolina record of Curlew Sandpiper. No photographs of the bird were included in the article, and the curlew was collected as definitive proof of occurrence in the state. Conversely, the Fall 2022 issue contains a General Field Note on the first South Carolina record of Slaty-backed Gull that includes multiple color photographs. Due in great part to the advances in photography and the increased number of field observers with cameras, collection of birds is no longer necessary to document records.

The 1972 edition’s lead article examined the occurrence of Swallow-tailed Kites in the southern Appalachians, noting that the species could formerly be found with regularity north along the Mississippi Valley to Minnesota and Wisconsin. The article concluded that prior to 1900, Swallow-tailed Kites occurred fairly regularly in “portions of western North Carolina during the late summer and early autumn months”.

An article summarizing spring bird counts in 1972 noted that two Black Rails were flushed at Wrightsville Beach, NC; Harry and Edmund LeGrand noted two occupied Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nests at Bodie Island, NC; gulls and Common Tern were seen at a newly-created 20,000 acre reservoir in Rocky Mount, NC; and in Charlotte, NC, Canada Geese successfully fledged two goslings.

Finally, Wake County’s first record of Snow Goose was published, a sighting of 10 birds in the eastern part of that county.

## Did You Know?

Full copies of *The Chat* dating back to the very first issue, March 1937, are available for viewing online. Find these and more at:

<https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/chat/>



### The Chat

BULLETIN OF THE NORTH CAROLINA BIRD CLUB  
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JOHN H. GREY, JR., EDITOR  
1718 PARK DRIVE



# CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

[www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes to the extent allowable. Pay dues or make donations at <https://carolinabirdclub.org/dues>. Make change of address at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile>. Send correspondence regarding membership matters to the Headquarters Secretary. Answers to questions about the club might be found at <https://carolinabirdclub.org/about.html>.

## ANNUAL DUES

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Patron.....	\$50.00 and up
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